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OLD GERMAN LOVE SONGS

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OLD GERMAN LOVE SONGS

TRANSLATED FROM THE MINNESINGERS
OF THE 12TH TO 14TH CENTURIES

BY

FRANK C. NICHOLSON, M.A.

CHICAGO
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
1907

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GENERAL

Mit Degen und mit Speere
Waren sie stets bereit;
Den Frauen gaben sie Ehre
Und sangen widerstreit.
Sie sangen von Gottesminne,
Von kühner Helden Mut,
Von lindem Liebessinne,
Von süsser Maienblut.

UHLAND.

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25
1625

PREFACE

ENGLISH works on the subject of the German Minnesong are so scanty in number and inadequate in character that an addition to them can hardly be considered superfluous. That which I offer in the present little volume, slight and incomplete as it is, has yet, I believe, a wider scope than anything of the sort hitherto published in this country. My object has been to present English readers with a selection from Minnesong sufficiently varied and extensive to illustrate roughly the nature and range of the art and indicate the main lines of its development. As regards the translations I need only say that I have endeavoured to preserve the form of the originals, so far as this seemed possible in English, and at the same time to give as faithful a rendering of the matter as could profitably be attempted under the conditions. This will perhaps account for some uncomfortable metres, imperfections of rhyme, and other structural infirmities which, especially in the earlier poems, may affect the reader a little disagreeably, and it will also, I hope, excuse to some extent a certain monotony of rhyme which I have been unable to overcome. I do

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not doubt that with a greater freedom of treatment than I have permitted myself a skilful translator might produce much more attractive verses; the method I have followed, however, can certainly be defended, though its results in the present instance may not speak highly in its favour.

It is no less my duty than my desire to acknowledge here the assistance I have received from my former teacher, Dr. Karl Breul, to whose kind counsel I could appeal in all matters of difficulty, and to whose suggestive and stimulating criticism I owe very much. But indeed I am indebted to him for infinitely more than criticism and commentary, however helpful: it was he who first inspired me with a love for the Master of Minnesong, "den man ê von der Vogelweide nande"; it was his sympathy that afterwards encouraged me to continue the tentatives at translation I had begun; and it was his cordial and energetic support that finally endowed my purposes with such small measure of accomplishment as they have received. For these kind offices I wish to express my warmest gratitude.

I have also to render hearty thanks to my friend, Mr. Vernon H. Rendall, who was good enough to read through the manuscript of my work and to offer a number of most welcome and valuable suggestions.

FRANK C. NICHOLSON

November 1906

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INTRODUCTION

I

WHILE the term "Minnesong" is properly applicable only to that portion of the mediæval German lyric which has love for its theme, yet it is commonly employed in a much wider sense. Minnesong, in fact, may be roughly defined as the whole body of German lyrical poetry produced from about 1170 to the beginning of the fourteenth century, and it embraces not only a considerable amount of the religious and political verse of the time, but also an important section of the didactic composition. During the greater part of the period, however, and especially in its preliminary stages, the courtly love-song was so predominant over every other kind of lyric that it has not unnaturally been taken as representative of the entire class. I shall here attempt to give a brief account of the origin and nature of this Minnesong, which sprang up so rapidly and flourished so richly in its season, and it will therefore be desirable that we should first of all note broadly the conditions of literature in Germany prior to its appearance.

From the end of the ninth to the middle of the

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eleventh century German literature was in a state of more or less complete torpor, but in the succeeding age, which really has some claim to Fuller's characteristic description of it as "the first cock-crowing after the midnight of ignorance and superstition," it was once more roused to wakefulness and activity. During the earlier stages of this revival the vernacular written literature was strongly ecclesiastical in spirit, the subjects of which it treated were almost exclusively religious, and the ideal of life that it upheld was one of asceticism and renunciation. Such doctrine, however, though delivered with emphasis and sincerity, and often enough with real power, failed to gain any general acceptance, for another and very different influence was at work and was gradually transforming the whole spirit of German society. Chivalry, which had originally taken root in Southern France, and had spread thence, first to the North and before long to Germany also, began about this time to enter upon that notable development which was to inaugurate a new epoch in the history of the Middle Ages. Its growth and advancement were largely assisted by the great military undertakings of the period, above all by the Crusades,—"at once the cause and the effect of chivalry," says Gibbon,—which directly and indirectly modified the character of the knighthood very deeply. That their influence was to a certain extent harmful and demoralising may be readily admitted, but they certainly had their conspicuous merits. They were the chief agent in bringing the whole body of the knights together, in levelling down old distinctions of rank, and in pro-

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moting that ideal unity of the order which was, perhaps, its most significant characteristic as well as its strongest support. Nor was this bond of unity confined to the members of a single nation; the great countries of Europe were linked one to another by virtue of their knighthood, the knight might claim the privileges of chivalry wherever he went, and a general exchange of ideas and social practices was the natural result. Moreover, the contact with foreign races and the observation of a culture in many respects superior to their own greatly helped to educate the æsthetic faculties of the Crusaders, and thus the rude and uncouth warrior of the older times was gradually converted into the polished knight who is so familiar a figure later on. The second main factor in the development of knightly refinement is to be found in the great and increasing influence exercised by women on the social life of the time. In the Middle Ages the women of noble birth—the restriction is, of course, necessary—were as a rule more highly cultivated than the men, and they now began to occupy a very prominent position in the society of the higher circles. The results soon became apparent, and nowhere more markedly than in the domain of literature.

Such a society, it is clear, would find little that was congenial in the teaching of the clergy, whose ascetic ideals were wholly opposed to the knightly conception of life. There was, however, another class of composition which enjoyed a greater measure of popularity—that of the wandering minstrels or jongleurs, who did at least afford their audience entertainment of a sort, and who

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now, at the beginning of the twelfth century, proved of real service to literature. Combining the attributes of singer and buffoon in varying proportions, and leading for the most part a restless, precarious, and not very reputable life, these strolling artists had for centuries past formed a distinctive class of their own: their social status was low, they were regarded with contempt by their patrons, and were bitterly opposed by the clergy, but none the less they could generally count upon a fair share of the public favour, and falling in with the tendencies of the time as they did, they were ultimately able both to improve their position and elevate their art. At the period of which we are speaking secular literature was almost entirely in their hands, and their songs and tales, many of which dealt with national themes and breathed a spirit of romance and adventure, appealed successfully to the higher classes as well as to the public at large. The Church inveighed against them vigorously, but ineffectually, until finally, realising that a change of tactics was necessary, it decided upon a characteristic move, and began to fight its adversaries with their own weapons. The clergy, that is to say, now fell to producing works that were quite in accordance with the tastes of their knightly audience. Most important in this connection are the translations of French romances which began to appear under their hands in the second quarter of the twelfth century, and which really ushered in the great period of Middle High German literature. French influence, indeed, was predominant in Germany at this time; even as early as the middle of the eleventh century the wide-spread

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introduction of French customs had given rise to remark, and the rapidity with which they gained ground is proved by the general adoption of French terms in the chase, the tourney, and other knightly occupations a comparatively short time after. It was inevitable that literature too should ultimately be affected, and it is therefore not surprising that the translations referred to should at once have had an immense success and should have introduced a new literary era. Their result is seen in the decisive action taken shortly afterwards by the knightly order: hitherto the German knights had held aloof from the practice of literary composition, regarding it as beneath their dignity, but now they began to appear as authors on every side, and soon took literature almost entirely into their own hands. Before long it was no uncommon thing for an indigent nobleman to adopt literature as a profession, and the emulation, interest, and enthusiasm displayed in its exercise resulted in that extraordinary outburst of poetical activity seen at the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century.

With so much by way of preface we may pass on to the consideration of Minnesong itself, which makes its appearance and reaches its highest development during the period just mentioned.

II

Minnesong was a social entertainment of the courtly circles, and for a time was cultivated exclusively by men of knightly rank. It is not at all easy to form a just conception of the nature of this society; certain of its

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peculiarities are apt to be exaggerated and others disregarded by the modern observer, but so far as we are here concerned, its principal characteristics are tolerably plain. German chivalry had reached a high point of refinement towards the close of the twelfth century; the progress of development had gone on for long, and was now practically completed. Older class distinctions had been largely done away with, the dignity of knighthood was shared equally by all members of the order, and free social intercourse was thus encouraged to a far greater extent than had hitherto been the case. The acknowledged aim of this society was "hövescheit"—courtliness, urbanity, elegance, everything, in short, that served to promote grace of life and delicacy of perception. An elaborate etiquette sprang up, the social arts were diligently cultivated, and a new importance was attached to polish of manner and attractiveness of person. The knightly ideal of behaviour is more or less summed up in the term "diu mâze"—the Provençal "mesura"—which implies the art of observing due measure and decorum, of exercising self-control in all circumstances, and never overstepping the limits of good-breeding under any provocation of grief or joy; and the emphasis with which this virtue is recommended indicates the somewhat artificial and self-conscious state of society. The prevailing tendencies are also clearly enough reflected in the language of the time, which began rapidly to modify its character; it had already been drilled and exercised with good effect by the wandering minstrels and the clergy, and now, under the direction of the knightly singers, it acquires elegance and piquancy,

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moves with a lightness and ease previously unknown and scarcely recaptured since, and shows within its own limits a very remarkable perfection of form.

Together with the refinement in manners there appears a spiritual transformation. That ardent, imaginative ideal of love, religion, and patriotism which more than anything else distinguishes the age from any that preceded it, is now established in theory if not in practice. The change is most strikingly seen in the new conception of woman as a thing enskied and sainted, a sovereign to whom unquestioning homage is due. The woman, or rather the lady,—for the women of humble birth scarcely come into the question here,—is no longer regarded as inferior to and dependent upon man, but is exalted high above him and made to occupy the centre of social life. It is worthy of note that she did not herself take an active part in the intellectual life of the time; she did not, that is to say, directly engage in art, literature, or politics. But indirectly her influence was very great, and made itself felt in every department of knightly activity. The knight looked to her approval as the final aim of all his undertakings; for her he learned to sing and sweeten talk, in her honour he did battle in the lists, and to her he dedicated his new and engaging art of Minnesong.

We have now to consider from what source the knightly poets drew this art and how they developed it, and this is a difficult and much debated question. The main problem is this: Is the origin of the courtly Minnesong to be sought for in an older national love-song, or solely in the poetry of the Trobadors and Trouvères?

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In other words, did Germany possess an older love-lyric to which the early development of Minnesong can be referred? A final answer to the question has not yet been given, and all that I can here attempt is to touch upon the principal facts that bear on the subject and to indicate the conclusions that seem least open to dispute. It may be broadly asserted that no examples of a popular German love-lyric prior to Minnesong have come down to us. That such were composed can hardly be doubted, for it is a very improbable supposition that a nation which diligently cultivated other forms of poetry should have wholly neglected the most natural of all. They were composed, but they were not written down, for in those early times writing and reading came by nature only to a special class of men—the clergy, who would be much more likely to suppress compositions of that kind than to preserve them in an enduring form. It is reasonable to assume that the songs were such as are so often met with in the later Volkslied—fresh and spontaneous expressions of joy or sorrow, and quite free from the characteristics of an artificial class-poetry. There are no sufficient grounds for maintaining that they were specially numerous or highly developed, and it is impossible to tell how far early Minnesong may have been affected by them, though that it was affected to some extent is, I think, pretty certain. The only trustworthy material for forming a judgment on this point is furnished by the earliest examples of the actual Minnesong we possess; some years ago it was customary to pronounce these of purely native origin, but more recent investigations seem to prove that in the majority

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of instances, at least, they must be regarded as distinct from the old national love-songs, for they contain phrases and expressions manifestly derived from the new conventions of the knightly society, and are thus not so much the remains of an older popular lyric as the beginnings of a courtly poetry imported mainly from Provence. Yet this statement does not apply to all of them, and it will accordingly be necessary to examine the question a little more in detail, so as to gain a clearer idea of the first stage of Minnesong.

III

In the verses of the oldest Minnesinger known to us by name—Der von Kürenberg—we find no positive trace of foreign influence. The conception of "Minnedienst," the homage offered by the lover to his mistress, does not yet appear, the relations between knight and lady being still represented as they were in the earlier period, when women occupied a distinctly subordinate position. It seems natural, therefore, to suppose that these poems really are founded on an indigenous song, though as they were certainly composed for a knightly audience, they cannot themselves be looked upon as "popular" verse in the strict sense of the term. Kürenberg, it is to be noted, lived and wrote in Lower Austria, on the banks of the Danube, where the national poetry had apparently been cultivated to a remarkable extent. I think, then, that a native origin may fairly be claimed not only for his poems but also for such verses of the other earliest Minnesingers as show similar character-

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istics, the chief of these characteristics being (1) that the conception of "Minnedienst" is absent, the more primitive aspect of love being represented; (2) that the metrical form is very simple and shows little variety, the stanzas being composed of pairs of verses; (3) that the rhymes are still rude and imperfect, assonance frequently taking the place of rhyme; and (4) that in most cases the poems consist of a single strophe and are naïve and unaffected in expression.

The poets whose verses are distinguished by these peculiarities would accordingly form the first group of the Minnesingers. Scarcely half a dozen of them are known to us by name, and only a few of their compositions have been preserved in the Minnesinger manuscripts. To a great extent, indeed, these poems stand quite outside of Minnesong proper, and it may be that they were only included in it because their authors eventually adapted themselves to its fashion and so acted as heralds of the new movement. For nearly all of them do undoubtedly show traces of the foreign influence in *some* of their verses; if we leave the anonymous poems out of the question, Kürenberg is perhaps the only one who belongs completely to the older school. Dietmar von Aist, Meinloh von Sevelingen, and the rest, though they seem to preserve the national tone in some of their songs, are in others affected by the Romantic spirit that was to give Minnesong its really distinctive character, and was, for a time at least, utterly to suppress the earlier type of love-song.

Southern France was the country that most richly supplied the material for this new literature. It was in

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Provence that the mediæval lyric had first developed; a courtly love-song had sprung up there towards the close of the eleventh century, and had been cultivated with a vigour and success the more astonishing when we consider how greatly it was hampered by the conventions of fashion. For in character it was above all things "fashionable": stringent rules were established for its form, which soon attained a degree of refinement that often enough degenerated into artifice, and its subject-matter was equally prescribed by the mode. In the later German Minnesong practically all the arts of the Provençal are to be found, although with more or less important modifications, and the first traces of their introduction appear even in this earlier group of poets of whom we have just spoken.

The question as to how the influence of the Provençal lyric was brought to Germany demands a word or two of notice. The chief centres for its reception would naturally be the courts of the princes, nobles, and ecclesiastical dignitaries who patronised literature and song; literary compositions in those days could not reach an extensive public except through recital, and at such courts the singers would find their largest and most appreciative audiences, and would be most eager to exhibit their new skill. The path by which the art of the Trobadors is generally acknowledged to have made its way into Germany is a northern one from west to east—first up to the north of France, then over the borderlands, up and along the Rhine, and so across the south of Germany eastwards to Austria. It did not reach North Germany till late, and never gained ground there to

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any extent. This used to be regarded as the only road of its transmission, but some years ago it was pointed out[1] that in all probability there was also a southern route leading by the north of Italy, through Friaul and over the Alp-lands, into Central Austria. This supposition explains a number of puzzling phenomena, and accounts for the exceptionally advanced position taken by Austria with regard to the innovations of chivalry. Had the Romantic impulse come by the former route alone, the south-eastern portions of the old German empire would naturally have been the last of all to be affected by it.

But by whatever paths the Romantic influence was introduced, it is at least certain that it soon spread and gained an undisputed supremacy, and that the Minnesingers of the second group are all under its dominion. The conception of love as a sort of ideal vassalage is now fully developed; the poet inevitably "serves" his lady, and where this idea of service appears we may be sure that Provençal influences, direct or indirect, have been at work. At the same time the structure of the poems undergoes fundamental changes, and is brought into conformity with the French rules: the stanza shows the characteristic triple division, in which the two first parts (the so-called "Stollen") correspond, while the third part (the "Abgesang") is formed on a different scheme; variety of metre is

[1] By Anton E. Schönbach in his *Anfänge des deutschen Minnesanges* (Graz, 1898). Schönbach's theory on this point has been accepted by many scholars; a "tumber leie" like myself can lend it no support, but may be permitted to express belief in its correctness and admiration of the ingenuity with which it is worked out.

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demanded, and purity of rhyme gradually comes to be regarded as essential; new Romance measures are introduced, notably the dactylic of four beats, an adaptation from the French *vers communs* of ten syllables, and direct translations from the Provençal are not uncommon, though they are certainly exceptional and become less and less frequent as time goes on. This period, which, roughly speaking, extends nearly to the close of the twelfth century, produces some of the greatest masters of Minnesong and illustrates most typically the true character and the limitations of the art. Among the poets of the group it will be sufficient to mention Friedrich von Hausen, the Swabian, who may be considered the first great representative of the new order of things; Heinrich von Veldeke, whose name is famous in the history of the knightly epic of mediæval Germany but who occupies a somewhat isolated position in Minnesong; Heinrich von Morungen, the Thuringian, one of the freshest and most original of all the lyrists; and finally Reinmar von Hagenau, who was an Alsatian by birth but at an early stage in his poetical career removed to the Court of Vienna, where he practised his art with extraordinary success, being regarded by his contemporaries as the "glory and light of all the tuneful train."

IV

There can be little question, then, that early Minnesong was chiefly indebted to the Provençal lyric for its development. Other literary influences, however, were no doubt

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also at work to some extent, and as great importance has been attached by certain scholars to at least two of these, they must not be passed by without a word of mention. The first is that of the vernacular religious verse—the German hymns which were composed on the model of the older Latin ones, and which unquestionably were of consequence for certain forms of Minnesong. But that they seriously affected Minnesong proper—that the Mariolatry which is to be found in some of them served as a starting-point for the new "Frauendienst," and so led the way to the typical love-lyric, as has sometimes been suggested—is most unlikely. Mariolatry cannot, indeed, be ignored as a factor in the development of "Frauendienst," and in some minds it may have coloured the conception of such a homage pretty deeply, but probably it was itself encouraged by the knightly worship of woman to a much greater extent than the latter was by it; it certainly did not grow to its extravagant proportions until the ladies who were the subjects of the knightly lyrics had already been elevated to their commanding position in society.

The second influence we have to consider is that of the secular Latin lyric of the Wandering Students or *clerici vagantes*, that sad, mad, bad, glad brotherhood of scholars who in the Middle Ages travelled in quest of learning through France and Germany, and indeed all the great countries of Europe, taking their pleasure by the way, whenever they could get it. Wine they loved deeply, dice dearly, and in women outparamoured the Turk, but literature has reason to be grateful to them, for they have left behind them a store of songs written

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with irresistible freshness, brilliancy, and tunefulness.[1] The richest period of their literary activity embraces the latter half of the twelfth century, and it has been maintained[2] that the early Minnesingers had in these rhymed Latin verses a foundation upon which they could build the structure of their art without any help from French sources. It is impossible, however, to accept this theory except within very narrow limits. There certainly does seem to be a close connection between the Latin poems and the German lyric of the earliest period, and instances may be quoted where the one has obviously been affected by the other, but it is very difficult to say definitely in such cases which was the original and which the imitation. And the points of dissimilarity soon become striking and significant: the sentiment of love, for example, as it appears in the songs of the Wandering Students, is altogether different from the imaginative conception met with in Minnesong, and the metrical structure of the German poems is, with one or two exceptions, distinct from that of the Latin. The direct influence of this lyric upon Minnesong, either

[1] The two chief collections of these are the *Carmina Burana* edited by J. A. Schmeller (4th ed., Breslau, 1904) and *The Latin Poems commonly attributed to Walter Mapes* edited by Thomas Wright (London, 1841). Anyone with a smattering of Latin and a not too rigidly Puritanical outlook upon life will find these volumes, especially the former, full of delightful things. English readers will find in John Addington Symonds's *Wine, Women, and Song* (London, 1884) a good account of the Wandering Students and their literature together with a number of skilful translations.

[2] Originally by E. Martin in the *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum*, Bd. xx. 46 ff., and more recently by Wilhelm Meyer in his edition of *Fragmenta Burana* (Berlin, 1901).

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as regards form or subject, must therefore be regarded as very small.

Finally, it may be of interest to add in this connection that the Latin classical authors—especially Ovid—seem to have exercised some slight influence on Minnesong. How far this is the case, however, has not yet been sufficiently determined;[1] the Trobadors certainly borrowed now and then from the Latin authors, and there is no reason why the Minnesingers should not have done so also, though few of them, I think, give any indication in their verses of being familiar with classical literature. But of course the influence here is in any case a quite secondary one, and does not affect the development of Minnesong at all vitally.

V

It has been necessary to discuss the origin and early stages of Minnesong at some length, because the subject is involved in considerable obscurity and conflicting views are held regarding it. It is, indeed, only fair to confess that, although I have tried to avoid questions of controversy as far as possible, there is a good deal in the foregoing account that may be challenged. With the subsequent development of the art, however, I may deal more briefly, trusting that the translations, which are

[1] Anton E. Schönbach in his *Beiträge zur Erklärung altdeutscher Dichtwerke. Erstes Stück: Die älteren Minnesänger* (Wien, 1899) draws attention to numerous passages from the earlier Minnesingers in which he finds imitations or reminiscences of Latin writers. I think he somewhat exaggerates the importance of such parallels, and is inclined to ascribe too much direct influence to the classical literature.

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chronologically arranged, will sufficiently illustrate its main characteristics.

The courtly love-song with its conventional assumptions, stereotyped phraseology, and restricted circle of motives was cultivated by the early Minnesingers to the exclusion of almost every other kind of lyric. It enjoyed an undisputed pre-eminence for upwards of a quarter of a century, and reached a remarkable degree of formal excellence. But even before the close of the twelfth century there are indications that its monotony was beginning to be felt, and a reaction against it was bound to come. In Walther von der Vogelweide, the greatest of all the Minnesingers, there appeared a poet whose genius was independent enough to oppose, and strong enough to overcome, its limitations. He was in his youth a pupil of Reinmar von Hagenau, the most typical representative of the elegant, sentimental Minnesong *à la mode*, and for a time he too fell in with the prevailing fashion, but as he attained to a fuller mastery of his art, he began to introduce new elements into it and to give it a welcome freshness and variety. His innovations, however, are not so much a revolt against the spirit of the courtly lyric—for he himself maintains the knightly attitude towards "Minne", and deplores the signs of its approaching degradation—as an endeavour to enlarge its narrow bounds and bring it into closer touch with nature. To a great extent he effects this by drawing from the source of that popular song which had been despised and rejected by the courtly poets; thus in him, as later on in Goethe, we see the poetry of art join hands with the Volkslied and thereby

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attain an unrivalled perfection. Accordingly his songs of so-called "niedere Minne," which celebrate a maiden of humble birth and not, as convention demanded, a married lady of high rank, mark a new departure in Minnesong, and in their freshness, charm, and exquisite form are the most captivating examples of all the mediæval lyric.[1] But it was not only in the case of the love-song that he freed himself from those fetters of etiquette that had kept the knightly singers bound so fast. He did not, like most of his predecessors, confine himself to the single theme of love, but dealt with all the great interests of his time—religious, political, and social—and thus enormously extended the range of his art. It was he who revived and perfected that form of didactic verse known as the "Spruch," which constitutes so large and important a section of the later Minnesong that we must delay a moment to consider it here.

The Spruch is in many respects distinct from the true song or "Lied,"[2] the main point of difference being that it consists of a single strophe, while the Lied is generally composed of several stanzas; from the

[1] I have not dared to attempt a rendering of Walther's great lyrics of this class, such as *Under der linden* or *Nemt, frouwe, disen krans*: even a translator's sacrilege may have its limits. Nor have I included in this volume any of his political poems, because they cannot be enjoyed without some acquaintance with the historical events of the period. The selections I have given from him are thus almost as inadequate to suggest the variety as the merit of his verses, and I owe his shade a double apology; of most of the other Minnesingers I need beg forgiveness on the single score alone.

[2] The terms "Spruch" and "Lied" in this technical sense were originally made use of by Simrock and have been retained by succeeding scholars, but it must be noted that they were not so employed by the Middle High German poets themselves.

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point of view of the music this implies that in the latter form the tune of the first stanza was repeated for each of the others, while the Spruch was "durchkomponiert," —*i.e.* each separate part of it had its own special melody. In style it is popular, and lacks the characteristics of a class-poetry, the subjects of which it treats being as a rule social and religious questions of general interest; moral aphorisms and proverbial philosophy, fables, riddles, reflections on life and death, and the like, find suitable expression in it. It rarely deals with "Minne," or if it does, its tone is didactic rather than lyrical, and it is never, like the genuine Minnesong, addressed to the lady.

Obviously the Spruch is a primitive form of verse, and must have existed ever since the time of the wandering minstrels. Yet of the earlier Spruch poetry few examples have come down to us. Those of the so-called Spervogel[1] stand alone in the early period of Minnesong, and with their unaffected style and homely sentiment look strangely out of place among the host of courtly love-songs. But it may be safely assumed that this kind of literature never ceased to be cultivated by the professional singers of humble birth; the knightly singers, most of whom, to begin with, were amateurs, would naturally hold aloof from it for that very reason, for down to the time of Walther von der Vogelweide the distinction between the courtly poet and the wandering gleeman was very marked. Walther, however, whose great merit it is to have bridged over the gulf between them in his life no less than

[1] *i.e.* Spervogel I., sometimes also called Herger; the verses of Spervogel II. are considerably later and more elaborate.

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in his art, eagerly appropriated the Spruch, elevated it to a higher sphere, and so gave it a permanent place in Minnesong. His own Sprüche touch on nearly all the important questions of his age, and include some of the finest political poems in German literature.

All the earlier forms of the mediæval lyric are thus fused and clarified in Walther, and in him Minnesong finds its greatest representative. After his time the history of the art is on the whole one of gradual decline; poets of real and varied talent did indeed appear in surprising numbers, but only one of them possessed sufficient originality and force of genius to strike out a new line for himself and found a school. This is a younger contemporary of Walther von der Vogelweide, the Bavarian knight Neidhart von Reuenthal, whose songs of peasant life exercised a strong influence on later Minnesong and found many imitators. They are realistic in treatment, and represent a further stage in the reaction against the courtly conventions that was inaugurated by Walther in his poems of "niedere Minne." Walther, however, was always in sympathy with the ideals of the knightly art and strictly maintained its standard of refinement, and it is characteristic of him that he strongly disapproved of the innovations made by the younger poet, whose choice of subject and freedom of expresssion seemed to him contrary to the laws of "hövescheit." Neidhart's earlier songs—his later verses show a return to the conventional type of Minnesong—are modelled on the old national poetry of country life and probably retain many of its characteristics. They fall into two groups of summer-songs and

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winter-songs, according to the season of the year represented in them. The former no doubt resemble the traditional folk-songs which celebrated the return of summer, and which from time immemorial had accompanied the festival and dance called forth by that occasion; indeed, it is quite likely that they were written for a similar purpose and were sung, in the first instance, to a peasant audience, though they would afterwards be recited, in a somewhat different spirit, to the courtly circles. They were in all probability originally suggested to Neidhart by a well-known class of the Romance lyrics—the so-called pastourelle, in which the favour shown to a knight by a fair shepherdess or peasant girl forms the stock theme. The winter-songs, which are also of ancient origin, are humorous and satirical, ridicule the manners and affectations of the peasants, and describe scenes of rustic merrymaking with considerable wit and not a little coarseness. It is possible that some of them may also have been sung before the peasants, but the majority must have been composed solely for knightly audiences, who regarded the "boor" with contempt, often tinged with envy for his material prosperity, and accordingly received these piquant verses with great favour.

From the time of Neidhart, Minnesong follows three main lines. One set of poets, of whom Ulrich von Lichtenstein may be taken as a typical representative, carried on the tradition of the courtly love-song. Another principally cultivated the Spruch, which had been brought into repute by Walther and, as the conventional type of Minnesong began to lose favour,

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came more and more into prominence; it is, indeed, generally the case that moral verse of admonition and denunciation flourishes best in a period of decline. Of this class Reinmar von Zweter is the leading representative. The third set of poets, among whom Gottfried von Neifen, Tannhäuser, and Steinmar deserve special mention, continued and to some extent developed the popular song as it appears in Walther and especially in Neidhart, gradually introducing a greater licence and a more pronounced spirit of burlesque. In fact the whole tendency of later Minnesong is towards an abandonment of the early knightly ideals. The art passes more and more into the hands of the professional singers and the citizen classes; parodies of the old "Frauendienst" become popular; Saint Anne and Saint Martin are sworn by no less than Sir May and Lady Minne, and so the philosophy of Sancho Panza finally carries it over that of Don Quixote. During this period, too, the structure of the poems is often preposterously elaborate, metrical *tours-de-force* in comparison with which such a form as that of the ballade is mere child's play, being common; thus, for example, we find stanzas in which all the rhymes consist of words exactly similar in sound and spelling but different in meaning, and verses in which every single word is a rhyme,—the latter form is a near approach to that affected by Aramis in the poem of which the first canto, it may be remembered, "contained four hundred lines and lasted a minute." In the same way didactic verse gives evidence of increasing pedantry and affectation; the burgher-poet poses as a master of all the arts, fills his verses with extravagant

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conceits and scraps of a fantastic erudition, and attaches an inordinate importance to the correct handling of intricate metrical forms. Too many of these later productions suggest Holofernes's criticism: "Here are only numbers ratified; but for the elegance, facility, and golden cadence of poesy, *caret*." Thus Minnesong gradually and insensibly passes into Meistersong with its guilds and schools and elaborate formalities.

VI

The preceding account may serve to indicate in its broadest outlines the course of the literary development of Minnesong. We have now to consider the social conditions under which the art was practised and by which, in its early stages at least, its character was determined.

Minnesong, it has been said, was at first cultivated by members of the courtly society, but this statement may be qualified a little further. The nobility of the time was divided into two great classes—a higher, which had been developed from freemen, and a lower, which had been developed from serfs. The first representatives of the art, who practised it as amateurs and not for reward, belonged for the most part to the higher nobility: during its earlier period, which extends to about 1190, it remained principally in their hands, and was very restricted both in choice and treatment of subject. But before long it was taken up by the lower nobility—the vassals—by whom it was rapidly developed and brought to its perfection: the greatest of the Minnesingers—Reinmar, Morungen, Walther, and Neidhart—were all members of

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~~this order.~~ Much the same thing had happened in the case of the Provençal lyric, which also found many of its ablest masters among the vassal-class. For the better understanding of the subject it is worth while to cast a glance at the history of these vassals in Germany.

It was the custom for wealthy nobles in the Middle Ages to keep a multitude of dependents, and from an early period we find mention of certain household officers, known as *ministeriales*, in the service of the emperors, prelates, and barons. These ministerials had originally sprung from serfdom, but had, since the eleventh century, formed a birth-class of their own; they shared with the higher nobility the privileges of military service and the right of holding fiefs, and before the close of the twelfth century their social position had come to be one of considerable consequence and steadily continued to improve. Many of them were highly educated men and held posts of great trust and importance, yet owing to their obscure origin they were not regarded as quite on a level with the older nobility; for example, marriage between a vassal and a lady of high birth was held to degrade the latter. It was natural that the more cultured men of this class, mixing freely as they did in the society of the courts, should devote themselves eagerly and successfully to the practice of Minnesong. They would necessarily come in contact to a considerable extent with the ladies of that society and to them they would address their poems; each singer, that is to say, would select some particular lady whose favour he desired to obtain, and would offer her the tribute of his verse. The choice, no doubt, was often a mere matter

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of form or policy, but in some cases it may easily have been dictated by genuine admiration.

The vassals, then, made themselves masters of the art of Minnesong, practised it for their own advancement, and before long adopted it as a profession, thereby starting it on a new stage of its development. It must frequently have occurred that a ministerial was unable to obtain a fief from his lord; in that case, if he had no other employment, he would have to leave his home, set out to seek his fortune elsewhere, and offer his services to some wealthier or more generous patron. It is not unlikely that a number of the Minnesingers found themselves in such a plight; they would wander from place to place, practising their art and finding entertainment for a longer or shorter period at the courts of different princes and nobles, but would have no hope of obtaining a permanent position or settled income unless they could secure the favour of some powerful lord and be taken into his service. It was through men of this class—probably above all through Walther von der Vogelweide—that the Minnesong proper with its exclusively knightly outlook and ideals was gradually brought into closer contact with the art of the wandering minstrels and was taken up by these humble singers also. And thus we find it diligently cultivated by high and low within a comparatively short time after its introduction.

It should be observed, however, that while the range of the art was thus greatly extended, the character of the knightly love-lyric itself was little altered. Its conventions had been fixed and were maintained in all

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their force even by the singers of humble birth who cultivated that particular form of verse. Its most striking feature is, of course, the curious relation between the sexes that it represents: the knight's attitude towards the lady is one of conscious inferiority and unconditional submission. It has been pointed out in an earlier section that the few early examples of German Minnesong in which this conception of homage does not appear, really belong to an older class of poetry and that Romance influence was responsible for the new order of things. Among the higher orders in Provence the fashion of a kind of love-homage with its forms modelled on those of feudalism had sprung up and gained ground very rapidly; the Trobador declared himself the "vassal" of the lady whom he loved, claimed from her the privileges of vassalage, and served her in the hope that she would eventually reward him with the "fief" of her favour. This conception of "Frauendienst" was introduced into Germany, and evidently appealed very strongly to the sentiment of the cultured classes. It was to some extent modified and brought into accordance with the forms of German feudalism, and thus "Minnedienst," the ideal vassalage, was established, "Minne" being regarded as the great element of refinement in life and the source of all earthly happiness.

VII

The question necessarily arises: What were the actual relations between the poet and the lady whom he addressed? There is little doubt that the Minne-

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singers offered their homage principally to married women of higher rank than themselves. Attempts have indeed been made[1] to prove that, in the majority of cases at least, they addressed themselves to girls whom they hoped eventually to marry, but this theory, though no doubt the pleasanter one of the two, cannot easily be accepted. Girls played so small a part in the social life of the time and were so strictly guarded before marriage that opportunities of intercourse with them must have been rare, and besides it must be borne in mind that the Minnesinger might already have a wife of his own. It is incontestable, too, that the Provençal and French poets addressed their verses to married women, and this is a strong argument that it was not otherwise in Germany. As regards the morality of such relations, it would hardly be fair to judge them from the modern standpoint. The fashion of Frauendienst is nowadays apt to strike one as a trifle ridiculous, and a glance at the innumerable and unvarying protestations of homage made by the poets to their mistresses leaves one with a general impression that in those days Frau Minne was sooner caught than the pestilence and the taker ran presently mad. But there is no reason to doubt that the new worship for women was in the main quite sincere, though it may sometimes have been expressed in an extravagant manner, and that its influence was on the whole very beneficial. Of course it is obvious that in dealing with a complex problem like this no universal

[1] Especially by Reinhold Becker in his *Der mittelalterliche Minnedienst in Deutschland* (Halle, 1897), an interesting and suggestive little book, though its main thesis must be regarded as untenable.

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rule can be laid down. The spirit in which such homage was offered and the results it produced would vary according to the character of the individual. The nobler nature would apprehend it from the imaginative and ideal side, escape its dangers, and get nothing but good from it. In other cases, no doubt, the relations were of a quite artificial kind; Minnedienst was little more than a conventional and fantastic form of intercourse between man and woman, hardly subject to the conditions of actual life. The lady might or might not formally accept the singer as her vassal, but would in any case have no intention of granting him "reward," and would very likely evade the occasion for doing so by setting him tasks involving some time and trouble; if she could not bid him fetch her a toothpicker from the farthest inch of Asia, she might at least, and often did, command him to take part in a Crusade. The singer on his part might finally get tired of being kept so long without recompense, and would in that case quit her service and offer his homage to someone else, not without complaining of the ill-usage he had received. But it is only natural that instances should also have occurred in which genuine passion was felt on both sides, or at least on one, and love-intrigues were entered on in earnest, so that there might be good reason for a husband to keep watch and ward by means of the "huote" and "merkaere"[1] against whom the complaints

[1] Strictly speaking the "merkaere" are those who act as spies, discover the intimacy between the lovers, and prevent them from meeting, while the "huote" represents those who are set to keep guard upon the lady's honour; the distinction, however, is by no means carefully observed.

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of the poets are so incessantly directed. The ladies of the time, it must be remembered, were generally married at a very early age and had no choice in the selection of their husbands, and it might easily happen that a poet would inspire in his mistress a passion he himself felt.

In this connection it may be well to mention that the so-called "Frauenstrophen" in Minnesong—*i.e.*, those verses in which the speaker is a lady who declares in more or less passionate terms her devotion and surrender to the knight—cannot be accepted as genuine except with very large reservations. It is, indeed, doubtful if any of them were actually composed by the ladies. We know that in Provence women did to some extent practise the art of poetry, but we have no proof that this was the case in Germany. No name of any such poetess has been handed down to us; there is no German Sappho of the thirteenth century to compete with the illustrious Karschin of the eighteenth, and it is therefore difficult to do more than concede the possibility of literary ladies having taken an active part in Minnesong. All or nearly all of these verses were probably composed by men; they would often be entirely fictitious, but might in other cases have some basis of reality, inasmuch as the poet would make use of phrases and sentiments he had heard from the lady. Thus an attractive explanation of some of them is afforded by the passage in Ulrich von Lichtenstein where he relates how his mistress sends him a message and he thereupon turns it into verse.

The whole subject of the actual relations between the poet and the lady is perplexing, and must necessarily be

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left rather vague. How far Minnedienst and Minnesong may have been affected by unusual and more or less morbid conditions of sexual life, as indicated in the exaggerated subservience of the man to the woman, I shall not attempt to discuss; the question is one for the specialist in psychology. It is plain enough, however, that the state of affairs was not altogether wholesome or natural, and in fact it was patently contradictory. Minnedienst was considered, and to a great extent, no doubt, with justice, to refine the manners and elevate the character of its votaries, but if pushed to its logical conclusion it evidently came into opposition with morality. The lover held himself entitled to claim reward in return for faithful service, and probably the general opinion of society would have supported such a claim. He might often enough be satisfied with some small token of favour, but if he proved more exacting, awkward complications could not fail to arise. Here, indeed, lay the fatal weakness of Minnedienst, and perhaps the consciousness of this contradiction may have been one of the chief reasons that the enthusiasm for its practice began so soon to lose its original sincerity.

VIII

It is hardly surprising that the Minnesong proper should in these circumstances be open to the charge of monotony. Its few stock subjects—the suit of the lover, his lament at the lady's cruelty, his demand for recompense, and so on—are repeated over and over again with innumerable trifling variations, but nearly always in the

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conventional manner. The sentiment is that of the courtly love *à la mode*: the knight appears exclusively in the aspect of lover, and of the stirring and active portion of his life we hear nothing. The joy of battle and spirit of adventure that are so manifest in the epic poetry of the time are strangely absent from the lyric, and even when the Crusade furnishes the theme of a poem, as it very often does, love generally holds the foremost place and determines the treatment. Expression of genuine passion is rarely met with unless in the case of the so-called "Tagelieder"[1] or Daysongs —poems that describe the parting of two lovers at dawn after a night of secret love—and these are mostly dramatic rather than lyrical in character. Naturally, too, the language suffers from the constraint of fashion and is often stiff and artificial; the poet does not attempt to be individual in style, but is content to express the general sentiment of his society, and therefore employs the set terms and current phrases of court life. Moreover, as he was under the obligation of suppressing all allusions that might lead to the discovery of the lady whom he wooed or pretended to woo (her name, for example, must never be mentioned), it was not easy for him to be spontaneous or personal, and he would generally prefer to draw upon the stock of stereotyped subjects for his song.

[1] The "Tagelied" is really an old national form of verse, but in Minnesong it shows the influence of Romance models very markedly. Thus the figure of the Warder, who plays so important a part in nearly all the later songs of this class, appears first in the Provençal "alba," from which it was probably introduced into German Minnesong by Wolfram von Eschenbach.

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This uniformity in the choice of subject leads on to the question of verbal plagiarism. Throughout Minnesong there occur numerous examples of agreement in thought and expression. Many of these are probably to be regarded as the more or less fixed formulas of the knightly society, which had established a regular phraseology of its own; others will not so readily admit of this explanation, and seem at first sight to be directly borrowed from the first Minnesinger who made use of them. It must be remembered, however, that such similarities of expression might well enough arise from similarity of circumstances real or fictitious, so that the plagiarism might be unconscious. But after all allowances have been made, there remain many cases of obvious imitation, and some of the inferior poems are little more than mosaic-work from the phrases and sentiments of others. In this respect, as in many others, the Elizabethan sonnets afford an interesting and striking comparison with Minnesong.

Of course the monotony we have spoken of is most apparent in the case of the love-song proper, and is thus chiefly characteristic of the earlier period of Minnesong, when that kind of lyric was most generally cultivated.[1] Once Walther had succeeded in breaking through the restrictions of the conventional Minnedienst, a much greater variety was possible. And these restrictions had at least one compensation, that they induced the

[1] In a brief volume of selections the monotony is naturally much less evident than it would be otherwise: most readers of *Minnesangs Frühling* —the collection containing the poems of the lyrists prior to Walther von der Vogelweide—will, I think, admit that its variety is decidedly finite.

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poets to pay more attention than they might otherwise have done to the purely formal side of their art, and thus helped to establish that high standard of technical excellence which is one of its most notable features. It must also be remembered that, with the accompaniment of music, the songs must have been much less monotonous to their original hearers than they are to the modern reader.

IX

Literary critics have been far from unanimous in their estimate of Minnesong. A good many Germans have, perhaps, been pardonably inclined to exaggerate its merits, while aliens, either from want of proper sympathy or because their acquaintance with it has been slight, and their knowledge of the old German language imperfect, have often disparaged it unduly. That admirable critic Lowell, for example, certainly speaks rashly and unadvisedly when he says:[1]—"On the whole, it would be hard to find anything more tediously artificial than the Provençal literature, except the reproduction of it by the Minnesingers." A more acceptable judgment is pronounced by Professor Saintsbury,[2] who declares it to be "the most varied and charming lyric of the Middle Ages," and adds, in discussing its obligations to the Romance poetry, that "even the borrowed material is treated with such intense individuality of spirit that it almost acquires independence." Of course, it must

[1] In his essay on Chaucer.

[2] In *The Flourishing of Romance and the Rise of Allegory* (Edinburgh, 1897).

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always be borne in mind that the art, although it was wonderfully quick in developing, extended over a very long period and is represented by a very great number of poets — von der Hagen's collection of them gives upwards of a hundred and fifty. It is inevitable that among such a multitude of Minnesingers there should be a good many whom the gods did not make poetical and whose productions are of comparatively small value; the wonder rather is that such a number of them do display some true lyrical gift and write verses that still possess a charm in spite of their many conventions and limitations. It is, however, more to the point that Minnesong can boast four or five poets of real eminence and one poet of genius, for after all we must judge of art by its highest achievements. In the allowance of modern readers, therefore, Walther von der Vogelweide must in himself overweigh all the host of his fellow-singers, for his verse at its best is supremely good and makes a universal appeal. "Lord, what a blessed thing it is to read a man who really can write," said Dickens of Tennyson, and one is very much inclined to echo the sentiment on first making acquaintance with Walther. In his more mature poems—some of his early work is imitative and rather insignificant — we feel that he is able to say exactly what he wishes and in absolutely the best way. He alone among the Minnesingers has entire command of his material, and neither wastes nor misplaces a word; his treatment of language shows something of the mastery displayed by Dante or Goethe. Thus his finest Sprüche achieve an apparently perfect simplicity and freedom of effort; the metre, rhyme, and other

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devices by which their effect is so enormously heightened, are felt to be quite spontaneous, and the points are made with an ease that leaves the reader with a delighted sense of satisfaction. He is no less admirable in the pure lyric, and in the religious and reflective poem, where he exhibits, together with this purely technical skill, that unmistakable and indescribable union of meaning and melody and that power of giving utterance to the universal in the particular that belong only to the great masters of song. And finally, the versatility of his genius, which can express all moods from the airiest playfulness—he is almost the only German poet who can be gracefully arch—to the saddest seriousness, entitles him to be considered the representative of all that is best in Minnesong. The art that produced such a poet as this cannot be set aside as merely tedious or artificial.

For the rest, Minnesong no doubt does display many of the tiresome characteristics inseparable from any such fashionable kind of verse. But it can, especially during its earlier stages, justly pride itself upon a wealth of poems as graceful in sentiment as they are admirable in workmanship, and after all there are not many periods of German literature of which so much can be said. Its own finest period falls within the last quarter of the twelfth century and the first quarter of the thirteenth, and is thus not a particularly long one. Its course is indissolubly linked with that of chivalry, which began to enter upon its decline in Germany shortly after the latter date. Knighthood, indeed, with its strivings for an exclusive and impossible culture, could not preserve its

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glory for very long; real life clashed too roughly with its ideals. Nor could it be easily reconciled with the religious doctrines of the day, which condemned all worldly pomps and pleasures. Almost from the earliest times of chivalry we may note this conflict between the joy of life and the fear of retribution; most of the poets sooner or later make their sad recantation: Dame World gives but a sorry recompense, they cry despairingly; let us repent and transfer our allegiance to Heaven! And as knighthood degenerated, Minnesong, which was essentially an expression of one side of its ideal, necessarily declined too. The poets continually lament that the time of courtesy and true Minnedienst is past, and that rudeness and violence are met with everywhere. Gradually the knights ceased to cultivate or care for an art which was taken up more and more by the citizen class. Yet echoes of the older music are audible to the end; ever and anon a snatch of belated melody recalls the full chorus of the prime, and the song of the earliest Minnesinger is still tuneful on the lips of a last descendant.

X

It may be well to close this cursory account of Minnesong by saying a few words about the professional Minnesinger and his manner of life. Though the art was practised by all classes of society—by emperors, nobles, vassals, and finally by men of quite humble birth—we are here concerned chiefly with those who adopted it as a profession, since it was through them that its productions obtained a wide circulation. They

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led for the most part a restless and uncertain life, for few of them were fortunate enough to secure a permanent position in the service of a wealthy patron, and failing that, they were forced to travel from one place to another, those of the better class on horseback and generally accompanied by an attendant, those of the lower class on foot. Their principal halts would be made at the courts of the nobles, where they would be likely to find their most sympathetic audiences; indeed, as amusements of any kind were scarce in those days, a singer of any merit could generally count upon a welcome and would be hospitably lodged and entertained by the lord of the castle during his stay. Before his departure he would receive a donation of more or less value, generally in the form of money, jewellery, or clothing. Of course the professional Minnesinger, whatever his rank, looked for material reward, and as a rule demanded it with a good deal of insistency; as liberality was considered one of the cardinal virtues in mediæval times, he would have the less scruple in urging his audience to practise it, and in fact such petitioning was taken quite as a matter of course and was not looked down upon as begging. He might often, however, remain for a considerable time in one place, especially during the winter, when travelling was almost impossible and when his art would prove doubly acceptable. Winter, it must be remembered, was a tedious and trying season, and the inmates of the castle, who were scantily provided with comforts and had few opportunities of diversion, might be cut off from all outside intercourse for months together. It was only with the return of spring that social pleasures

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could be resumed; accordingly that season was always hailed with joy, and the innumerable praises lavished upon it by the poets of the time are perhaps as much due to this circumstance as to a love of nature in the modern sense of the term. Certainly the mediæval poet seldom shows any really intimate and accurate acquaintance with the aspects of nature; he may tell us that the lindens grow green in April, but we shall not learn from him that ash-buds are black in the front of March; he delights in the songs of the birds, but does not care to note if it is the mounted thrush that pipes so rarely or the ouzel-cock with his orange-tawny bill; and the posies he gathers are nearly all of roses and lilies with here and there a violet—no garlands such as Perdita longed for or nosegays of visionary flowers such as Shelley bound in his dream.

The Minnesinger, then, was expected to entertain the company as occasion might offer: time and place would naturally vary according to circumstances. In summer-time the recital would probably take place out of doors —in the orchard or the courtyard; in winter one of the larger apartments of the castle would be used. The audience would seat themselves in order of rank, forming a semicircle round the singer, who would then deliver his poem. As regards the method of delivery there is much dispute, and indeed very little is known with certainty about the music of the Minnesingers. The usual instrument seems to have been a fiddle and bow, but apparently a kind of small harp was sometimes employed. There is no sufficient reason for maintaining that the singer must have delivered his song and played

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the accompaniment simultaneously; indeed, if the instrument were a fiddle, this would clearly have been impracticable, since its manipulation would have interfered with the production of the voice. In the case of the small harp, which would be set on the knee and propped against the breast, such a procedure would no doubt have been possible, and if we are to suppose that there was only one performer, we must assume either that this was what he did, or else that he first of all played through the melody on his fiddle and *then* sang his song without accompaniment. It seems more likely, however, that there were generally two performers, one of whom sang while the other played the accompaniment on the fiddle; the melodies must often have been pretty complicated, and in such cases the song could hardly be sung without accompaniment. Singers of the better class would therefore travel with a hired retainer, one of whose duties would be to act as accompanist, while the humbler minstrels, who could not afford to engage an assistant, might journey in pairs, and so give each other mutual support.[1]

With regard to the music itself little can be said. In modern times we are inclined, or rather obliged, to judge of Minnesong purely from the literary point of view, but it must not be forgotten that we are treating it unfairly in doing so. We are able to criticise only one half, and perhaps not the more important half, of the

[1] This difficulty as to the accompaniment holds good only in the case of the true lyric; the Spruch was probably a recitative rather than a song, and would require little musical accompaniment, so that a single performer could easily manage by himself.

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art, for it is evident that the singers themselves considered the composition of the melody of equal consequence with that of the text. It appears somewhat strange that the poet should be expected to compose the music to his songs, but this was the rule in the time of the Minnesingers, and, so far as we can judge, the result was satisfactory. Poets, however, are not usually a musical race, and it is only reasonable to suppose that the merit of a song often consisted chiefly in its literary qualities, while conversely many of the poems that strike us as weak and wanting in originality may have been largely redeemed by the excellence of the music. It is noteworthy that Walther von der Vogelweide seems to have been equally eminent as musician and poet; at least his contemporaries praise him in the former capacity as much as in the latter. Ulrich von Lichtenstein, too, in speaking of his own songs, is inclined to lay more stress on the melody than the words. The total and, it would seem, irretrievable loss of those early melodies therefore prevents us from properly appreciating the art of Minnesong.[1]

So far as the laws of composition are concerned, there is only one point that demands notice here. The ambition of the tyro Minnesinger would be to compose a song in a new form and so acquire the right of being regarded as an independent singer. The combination

[1] The most important publications with regard to the rhythm and melody of the Minnesongs are *Die Jenaer Liederhandschrift photolitographisch nachgebildet* (Jena, 1893), and the critical examination of this valuable MS. by G. Holz, F. Saran, and E. Bernouilli in their admirable work entitled *Die Jenaer Liederhandschrift*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1901).

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of text ("wort") and melody ("wīse") was generally termed "dōn," and it was incumbent upon every poet to invent at least one original "dōn." To this originality the greatest importance was attached even from the earliest times. A poet's "dōn" was his own peculiar property, and except in special cases could not be adopted by anyone else, but probably comparatively small alterations would suffice to give it a new character and sanction its claim to originality, and indeed it is doubtful if there was any express law against a poet's composing fresh words to a verse-scheme invented by another, so long as the melody was not borrowed. In any case, however, originality of metre was the rule, and this will account for the extraordinary variety of metrical forms in Minnesong, and perhaps excuse the grotesque and extravagant character of some of them.

Of course it must not be imagined that the Minnesinger practised his art extempore. It is no doubt very delightful to think of Blondel improvising his stanzas to Richard Cœur-de-Lion, but such facility, it is to be feared, was rare among the German minstrels. Nor need it be supposed that the professional singer would confine himself to the recitation of his own compositions; these might not be sufficient to satisfy an audience for any length of time, and his *répertoire* would in all likelihood include a number of songs by the best-known poets. He might trust entirely to his memory to retain the text and melodies of such verses, or possibly he might have them written down, each song on a separate sheet, and carry them about with him. In course of time, as the practice of the art extended, such sheets

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were collected and made into booklets, and from these booklets the great manuscripts in which the poems of the Minnesingers have been preserved probably drew much of their material.[1] No actual trace of the booklets remains, and the manuscripts we possess all belong to a fairly late period, the earliest dating from a time when Minnesong was already well in its decline. The most important are the Heidelberg MS., commonly spoken of as the Old Heidelberg Manuscript (A), which belongs to the end of the thirteenth century; the Weingarten MS. (B), which belongs to the early part of the fourteenth century; and the Great Heidelberg MS. (C), formerly known as the Manesse MS., which belongs to the first quarter of the fourteenth century. The last used to be in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, but was recovered by Germany and restored to Heidelberg in 1888; this is the manuscript that Heine went to look at immediately on his arrival in Paris, that he might see with his own eyes "the precious sheets which have preserved for us the poems of Walther von der Vogelweide, the greatest of the German lyrists." It is an exceedingly full collection, and is embellished with a number of miniatures which frequently supply helpful information regarding the poets.[2]

It is not surprising, then, that the tradition of the

[1] There is a good deal of uncertainty regarding the origin of these booklets and their relation to the MSS. The chief authorities on the subject are W. Wilmanns (in the *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum*, xiii. 217) and Hermann Paul (in *Paul und Braune's Beiträge*, ii. 437).

[2] A reproduction of the text of the Great Heidelberg MS. has recently been issued under the editorship of Friedrich Pfaff,—*Die grosse Heidelberger Liederhandschrift. In getreuem Textabdruck herausgegeben von*

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earlier poems leaves much to be desired. The text, arrangement, and ascription of authorship given by the MSS. are frequently open to question. Only in a few instances is there any sign of a Minnesinger having edited or arranged his work; as a rule it is impossible to determine the chronological order of a poet's verses except from internal evidence. Of course, too, many poems by the best writers have been lost beyond recovery.

Friedrich Pfaff: parts i.–iv. have already been published (Heidelberg, 1899–1903), and the fifth and concluding part is announced to appear in 1907.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

POSSIBLY one or two readers or intending students of Minnesong may be glad to learn the names of some of the most useful and important works on the subject, and I therefore mention a few of these below. Of course the list makes no pretensions to completeness: it consists mainly of the books to which I feel myself more particularly indebted, and the choice may therefore appear somewhat arbitrary. It should be noted that much of the most important literature dealing with the subject is to be found in the German periodicals and magazines devoted to the study of philology, literature, and antiquities; all such articles I must here leave entirely out of account.

Very little has been published in English on the subject of Minnesong. The volume by A. E. Kroeger entitled *The Minnesinger of Germany* (New York, 1873) is of very small scientific or artistic worth. Bayard Taylor has a popular article on the subject, containing a few translations, in his *Studies in German Literature* (New York, 1879), and M. W. MacCallum has a similar essay in his *Studies in Low German and High German*

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Literature (London, 1884); the latter is of merit, but is now naturally somewhat out of date. The *Selected Poems of Walter von der Vogelweide the Minnesinger*, translated by Walter Alison Phillips (London, 1896), contains a good Introduction, which is, however, more concerned with Walther in particular than with Minnesong in general. *Lays of the Minnesingers or German Troubadours of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (London, 1825) perhaps deserves mention as the earliest attempt at presenting English readers with specimens of this literature; the volume, which was published anonymously but which is known to have been the work of Edgar Taylor, has now merely an antiquarian interest.

Nearly all the important works are naturally by German authors. The following deal more or less fully with the origin and early history of Minnesong:—

L. Uhland's *Walther von der Vogelweide, ein altdeutscher Dichter* (Stuttgart, 1822),[1] is still well worth reading, not only for its literary charm but also for its scientific value, though of course it is quite out of date in many respects. Wilhelm Scherer's *Deutsche Studien I. und II.* (Wien, 1874 [2nd ed., 1891]) deal with Spervogel and the Spruch poetry and with the beginnings of Minnesong; the author's theories are very interesting and ingenious, but not always convincing.[2] Konrad Burdach's *Reinmar der Alte und Walther von der Vogelweide* (Leipzig, 1880) is in its way a classic,

[1] Reprinted in vol. vi. of Uhland's *Gesammelte Werke* in Cotta's well-known *Bibliothek der Weltlitteratur*.

[2] See more particularly Paul in *Paul und Braune's Beiträge*, ii. 406 ff.

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and has deeply influenced modern investigation on Minnesong. The same author's *Walther von der Vogelweide. Erster Theil* (Leipzig, 1900) is largely concerned with special points in Walther's work, and a good many of its conclusions have failed to gain general acceptance from scholars. W. Wilmanns's *Leben und Dichten Walthers von der Vogelweide* (Bonn, 1882) is a most carefully considered and scholarly piece of work; the author, however, has modified some of his views since its publication. Reinhold Becker's *Der altheimische Minnesang* (Halle, 1882) is valuable in parts, but must be used with caution. Anton E. Schönbach's *Walther von der Vogelweide. Ein Dichterleben* (2nd ed., Berlin, 1895) is popular in character but very good, and the same author's *Die Anfänge des deutschen Minnesanges. Eine Studie* (Graz, 1898) is a most important and original contribution to the history of early Minnesong. I do not know if it be worth while to offer the reader a caution against Edward Stilgebauer's *Geschichte des Minnesangs* (Weimar, 1898), which is untrustworthy and superficial.

With regard to editions of the Minnesingers, the most complete collection is that of Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen, entitled *Minnesinger. Deutsche Liederdichter des zwölften, dreizehnten und vierzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1838), in four large volumes. The book, however, cannot always be easily obtained, and is not convenient for general use. Smaller volumes of selections and complete editions of individual poets have taken its place to a great extent; the chief of these may be mentioned here. *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, edited by

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Karl Lachmann and Moritz Haupt (2nd ed., revised by F. Vogt, Leipzig, 1888), is virtually a complete collection of the lyric poets prior to Walther von der Vogelweide, in their chronological order; as a matter of fact one or two of the Minnesingers who used to be considered post-Waltherian ought by rights to find a place in it, and the order is not in all cases strictly correct, but the book is a standard one and is made use of by all scholars in its original form. Karl Bartsch's *Deutsche Liederdichter des zwölften bis vierzehnten Jahrhunderts* (4th ed., revised by Wolfgang Golther, Berlin, 1901) is an admirable and extensive selection from the whole body of Minnesong, about a hundred poets being represented in it; it is also supplied with a useful introduction and bibliography. *Die Schweizer Minnesänger* (Frauenfeld, 1886), by the same editor, is a complete critical edition of the Swiss Minnesingers—thirty-two in number; it contains a good many poems of comparatively small interest, and is a book for the specialist rather than the general reader. Friedrich Pfaff's *Der Minnesang der 12. bis 14. Jahrhunderts. Abteilung I.* (Stuttgart, [1892]) is also a very good selection, and is provided with brief and useful annotations; *Abteilung II.* gives the poems of Walther von der Vogelweide alone.

Only one or two of the editions of individual poets need be named. Of Walther von der Vogelweide there are numerous editions and selections: the best critical edition is that of W. Wilmanns, *Walther von der Vogelweide* (2nd ed., Halle, 1883), which is furnished with an ample and excellent commentary. A very good small edition for ordinary use is that of Hermann Paul,

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Die Gedichte Walthers von der Vogelweide (3rd ed., Halle, 1905), which contains succinct notes and a vocabulary. Of Neidhart von Reuenthal's poems the earliest critical edition is that of M. Haupt (Leipzig, 1858); a smaller edition, convenient for general use, is that of Friedrich Keinz, *Die Lieder Neidharts von Reuenthal* (Leipzig, 1889). Here, too, may be mentioned E. Pfeiffer's pleasant little book, *Die dichterische Persönlichkeit Neidharts von Reuenthal* (Paderborn, 1903), which gives a number of Neidhart's poems in the original Middle High German. Of Reinmar von Zweter there is a standard edition by Gustav Roethe—*Die Gedichte Reinmars von Zweter* (Leipzig, 1887); its long and elaborate Introduction contains a most thorough discussion of the Middle High German Spruch poetry.

Finally, two books of general reference deserve to be noted—Alwin Schultz's *Das höfische Leben zur Zeit der Minnesinger* (2nd ed., Leipzig, 1889) and Karl Weinhold's *Die deutschen Frauen in dem Mittelalter* (3rd ed., Wien, 1897). The former contains a great number of illustrations, and is most useful; the latter is a rather ponderous work, and seems now and then a little wanting in common-sense, but is full of learning and research. Jacob Falke's *Die ritterliche Gesellschaft im Zeitalter des Frauencultus* (Berlin, *n.d.*) gives in moderate compass a very readable account of the social conditions of the time.

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OLD GERMAN LOVE SONGS

ANONYMOUS

1. Summer and his Pleasures

(*Mich dunket niht sô guotes noch sô lobesam*)

"Nought I deem so worthy, nought I hold above
The fair bright roses and the love of him I love.
The little birds sing sweet;
They sing in the forest; that glads men's hearts to hear.
But if my lover comes not, the summer brings me little cheer."

2. Reward of Service

("*Mir hât ein ritter,*" *sprach ein wîp*)

"A knight there is," a lady said,
"Hath served me as I wished full fain.
Or ere the time of year be fled,
His due reward he needs must gain.

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Now snow and winter seem to me
Flowers and clover fair to be,
When in my arms I hold him fast.
Though all the world should take it ill
Yet must he get his will at last!"

3. A Merry Heart

(*Der walt in grüener varwe stât*)

The forest stands all green to see;
Oh, the joyous time of year!
Now from sorrows I am free;
Blessings on the maiden dear
Who doth fairly ease my woe!
I am glad; she will have it so.
  She beckoned me and gave a glance,
When on her last I set mine eyes.
Thereafter nothing else could chance
Save that she spoke in loving wise:
"Dear, now let thy heart be high!"
How joyous at that speech am I!
  "Thou wilt make me weep anon,"
Said the best of maidens there.—
Thou wilt bid me welcome soon
And wilt give me comfort fair.
As thou wilt, so will I be.
Dearest maiden, laugh with me!

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4. The Nightingale

(*Diu nahtegal diu sanc sô wol*)

So sweetly sang the nightingale,
That we should thank her without fail
And other little birds, I ween.
I thought upon my lady then,—
My lady, who is my heart's queen.

5. Summer

(*Der starke winder hât uns verlân*)

Now grim winter hath left us free.
The summer-tide is lovely to see.
Heath and forest show to me
Clover, flowers, and leaves on the tree.
Never again can our mirth now flee!

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DER VON KÜRENBERG

1. Nunc Amet

(*Vil lieber friunde fremden daz ist schedelîch*)

To use dear friends as strangers, a sorry thing it is!
Who to his friend holds closely, praise is surely his;
I am fain of that custom.
Bid him to love me dearly, as in times gone past,
And mind him of the words we spoke when I looked upon him last.

2. The Message

(*Wes manest du mich leides mîn vil liebe liep?*)

"Dear love, of what sore sorrow wilt thou now warn me?
The day of our parting may I ne'er live to see!
If thou shalt cease to love me,
I shall let all folk near me see full clearly then
That no joy whatsoever I find in all other men."

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3. Night Thoughts

(*Swenne ich stân aleine in mînem hemede*)

"When in my night-dress I stand all alone,
And when I think upon thee, noble knight, thereon
Bright grows my face, as blossoms the rose upon the thorn,
And the heart within me is sad and fain to mourn."

4. The Falcon[1]

(*Ez hât mir an dem herzen vil dicke wê getân*)

Full often hath it grieved me and brought my heart sore pain,
That what I ever longed for I never yet could gain
Nor e'er may hope to win it; a hapless case is this;
Yet I mean not gold nor silver; of mortal shape and look it is.
To rear me up a falcon more than a year I spent.
When I at length had tamed him all to my content

[1] The falcon, of course, symbolises the lady's lover. An Italian sonnet of the thirteenth century bearing a considerable resemblance to this poem is quoted in *Minnesangs Frühling*; English readers will find it translated in Rossetti's *Early Italian Poets* among the "Anonymous Poems." It is interesting to find an echo of Kürenberg's poem in one of the latest of the Minnesingers, Heinrich von Müglin; see p. 189.

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And fairly in his feathers had twisted golden strands,
Up in the air he mounted and flew away to other lands.
Since then I saw my falcon, and fairly did he soar;
Thongs of silken riband on his feet he bore,
And bright were all his feathers, golden-red to see.
May God send those together, whoso fond lovers fain would be!

5. Departure

(*Nu brinc mir her vil balde mîn ros, mîn îsengewand*)

Now bring me quick my charger and coat of mail to hand,
Since all for a lady I must leave the land.
She would fain constrain me my love to her to give;
Love of mine she never shall get, as long as she doth live.

6. Secret Love

(*Der tunkele sterne, sich, der birget sich*)

Lo, the star of evening hides its brightness now!
Fair lady, if thou see me, even so do thou!
Then upon some other man let thy glances go,
And how it stands between us there's never any man shall know!

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7. The Snare of the Fowler

(*Wîp unde vederspîl die werdent lîhte zam*)

Women, even as falcons, full quickly tamed are they!
If ye but lure them rightly, they come to hand straightway.
So was a lovely lady wooed by a gallant knight;
Whene'er I think upon it, my heart is high for delight.

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MEINLOH VON SEVELINGEN

1. Constant Love

(*Ich bin holt einer frowen; ich weiz vil wol umbe waz*)

I AM fain of a lady; right well do I know wherefore.
Since I began to serve her, she still hath pleased me more and more.
Dearer and ever dearer even with every day is she,
Fairer and ever fairer, and well, in sooth, she pleaseth me.
She is rich in all honour, high of worth, and sweet and true.
If I died in her service
And came to life thereafter, once more that lady I should woo!

2. The Message

(*Ich sach boten des sumeres: daz wâren bluomen alsô rôt*)

I SAW Summer's messengers, flowers as red as red could be.
Knowest thou, fair lady, what a knight hath offered thee?

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His service all in secret. Ne'er was his joy so great.
Now his heart is heavy, since he quitted thee of late.
Now make him glad and joyous e'er this summertide pass by!
Small will be his pleasure,
Till to his heart's contentment within thine arm at length he lie.

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BURGGRAF VON RIETENBURG

I SHALL COME FORTH AS GOLD

(*Sît si wil versuochen mich*)

THIS above all wealth I hold,
That to prove me's her desire.
I shall then be found like gold
Which is tested in the fire
And right well assayed.
All the better thus 'tis made,
Brighter, purer, fairer too.
What my song declares, is true.
The hotter it doth glow,
All the fairer will it show.

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SPERVOGEL I.

1. Testament

(*Ich sage iu, lieben sune mîn*)

I TELL you this, dear sons of mine,
For you there grows not corn nor wine;
You must not think to get from me
Lands to own or hold in fee.
Now speed you God in Heaven
And give you grace and happiness!
To Frut[1] of Denmark fortune fair was given.

2. The Hedgehog

(*Weistu wie der igel sprach*)

WHAT the hedgehog said is known:
"There's nought like quarters of one's own."
Kerling, build a house and store
All thy gear within the door!

[1] A mythical king of Denmark, famous for his wealth and liberality.

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The lords are all grown greedy.
Whoever has not hearth and home,
How often is he hard bestead and needy!

3. Host and Guest

(*Swie daz weter tuoje*)

Be the weather what it may,
The guest must rise at break of day.
Dry-shod oft the host may sit,
When the guest must up and quit
The quarters where he's staying.
Whoe'er in his old age would be
A host, must start in youth without delaying!

4. Pains of Hell

(*In der helle ist michel unrât*)

Great distress there is in hell:
Whosoever there doth dwell
Never sees the light of sun,
Neither aid from the moon
Or the shining stars is given.
Nay, all he sees doth vex him sore:
In sooth, he then would gladly be in Heaven!

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5. Praise ye Him!

(*Wurze des waldes*)

All roots of wood and wold
And hidden veins of gold
And deeps of land and sea,
Lord, they all are known to Thee;
In Thy hand they lie duly.
All the heavenly host above
Hath not the power to tell Thy praises fully.

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DIETMAR VON AIST

1. A Memory

(*Ûf der linden obene*)

In the linden up aloft a little bird began to sing:
Loud it was beside the wood. Then up once more my heart did spring
To a spot it knew of old; I saw the roses standing there.
They call to mind full many a thought which toward a lady I do bear.
"A thousand years it seems to me since in my lover's arms I lay.
Never mine the fault that he holds aloof so many a day.
Since I saw the flowers no more, heard no more the birds in song,
Brief indeed has been my joy, and my sorrow all too long."

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2. Lady and Falcon

(*Ez stuont ein frouwe alleine*)

Lonely stood a lady
And looked across the meadow,
And looked for her lover.
She saw a falcon fly above her.
"Happy falcon that thou art!
Where thou wilt, thou may'st depart.
Thou dost choose thee in the wood
Any tree thou thinkest good.
Now have I, too, done likewise:
I chose a man with these mine eyes,
Chose him out, mine own to be.
Now fair ladies grudge it me.
Why leave they not my love alone?
Of all their lovers, sure, I wished for none!"

3. Parting at Morning

(*Slâfest dû, mîn friedel*)

"Dear love, dost thou sleep fairly?
Alas, there wakes us early
A pretty bird that flew but now
And perched aloft upon the linden-bough."
"Full softly I was sleeping,
Child, till I heard thee weeping.

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Sweet must have its sorrow still;
But all thou bid'st me, sweetheart, I'll fulfil."
The lady fell a-moaning:
"Thou'lt ride and leave me lonely.
And when wilt thou come back to me?
Alas, thou takest all my joy with thee!"

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FRIEDRICH VON HAUSEN

1. Home Thoughts

(*Gelebt ich noch die lieben zît*)

If I might live until mine eyes
Should look upon that land again,
Where on a lovely lady lies
My whole delight and long hath lain,
Never man's nor maiden's eyes
In my face should see arise
Any trace of grief or pain.
Then many a thing would make me glad,
Whereat of old my heart was sad.
  Now I should think myself right near,
Tho' then her place seemed far from mine.
My heart ne'er felt such bitter cheer,
For at our parting sore I pine.
It shows its duteous service clear;
A different story I might hear
If I were somewhere by the Rhine!
Ah, no such tidings could I claim
Since hither o'er the Hills[1] I came.

[1] *i.e.* the Alps; the poem was composed in Italy.

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2. Scala Amoris

(*Si darf mich des zîhen niet*)

She cannot lay this charge to me,—
I loved her not right heartily.
The truth of that hath been too clearly shown,
She needs must own.
It brought me oft to such a plight,
I'd give my friends "good-morrow" when the night
Was drawing near.
I was so lost in thoughts of her
That sometimes to such witlessness I came,
I would not hear them when they spoke my name.
  And now my heart is sad and sore
To give that ancient struggle o'er,
To win the fairest lady that I know.
Where'er I go,
I needs must serve her truly still.
I think, whene'er it is not 'gainst God's will,
How sweet she is.
I pray that He forgive me this!
Yet, if the guilt of it I needs must bear,
Why did He fashion her so wondrous fair?
  I still have had a bitter strife
With grievous sorrows all my life.
A dear delight, whereon my heart was set,
Would never let
My mind in wisdom's track be bent.
'Twas love, and many men there be lament

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A fate like mine.
But now to God will I incline,
For He can help us out of every woe.
How near his death may be no man can know.
  I served a lady long, and she
Would give no recompense to me.
Of her I speak no word that is not good,
Save that her mood
Hath toward me been too merciless.
Methought I had escaped from my distress,
When I did place
My hopes of bliss upon her grace.
Alas, no grace from her could I procure!
Now I'll serve One whose recompense is sure.
  Thro' love I met with grief and pain,
Yet nothing in return could gain.
And yet, whate'er I suffered for love's sake,
I never spake
Nor shall speak aught that is not good
Of her and of the whole of womanhood.
This is my wrong,—
To have forgotten God so long.
Henceforth I'll hold Him high above them all,
And after Him give them my heart in thrall.

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3. Civil War

(*Mîn herze und mîn lîp diu wellent scheiden*)

My heart and body would fain part company,
Who have fared together for a long time past.
My body would fight the Paynim oversea,
But my heart on a lady hath fixed fast
Its choice, and now in trouble I am cast,
Sore grieving that those twain asunder flee.
Mine eyes have wrought much mischief unto me.
Now may God end this struggle at the last!
  I looked to be released from all my woe,
When once I took the Cross in Heaven's name.
And well might it have happened even so,
Were not my constancy itself to blame.
I should be whole and sound, quit of this shame,
Would but my heart its fond desire forego;
But little recks it now, too well I know,
What fortune may befall me in the game.
  Since o'er thee, heart of mine, I have no might,
But thou wilt surely go and let me grieve,
I pray to God that He direct thy flight
Where thou a gracious welcome shalt receive.
Alas, what will betide thee? Darest thou leave,
Against such troubles all alone to fight?
For who like me will help thee 'scape despite,
Who cleave to thee as I was wont to cleave?

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4. Vision

(*In mînem troume ich sach*)

In my dream I saw clear,
All night till morning broke,
A lady passing fair:
Thereafter I awoke.
Then was she ta'en from me, alas!
Nor knew I where was she
From whom my bliss should come to pass.
'Twas mine eyes worked this woe on me
And blind I fain would be!

5. Faith Unfaithful

(*Sie wânent dem tôde entrunnen sîn*)

Some deem that they have 'scaped from death,
Who take false vows for God's crusade;
Forsooth the heart within me saith
That this will give them sorry aid.
Who promised, then drew back dismayed,
Will prove it at his latest breath,
When at the gate he shall be stayed,
Which for His folk God openeth.

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HEINRICH VON VELDEKE

1. Tristan

(*Tristant muoste sunder danc*)

Tristan, in his own despite,
To the queen was ever true,
Rather by a philtre's might
Than by love compelled thereto.
Therefore should my sweet requite
Me for loving her aright,—
Better still than he could do,
Though I never drank such wine.
True and fair
  Beyond compare,
Let me now be thine,
And do thou be mine!

2. Winter Discontent

(*Sît diu sunne ir liehten schîn*)

Since the sun's bright beams are bent
Toward the time of chilly days,
And in grief and discontent
Little birds have hushed their lays,

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Sad at heart I make lament,
For on us will soon be sent
Winter, who his might displays
On the blossoms once so bright.
Dull and duller
  Grows their colour.
I feel at that sight
Dole and no delight!

3. Love Lines

(*Swer zer minne ist sô fruot*)

Whoe'er toward Love so plays his part
And serves love so that he will bear,
For love's sake, pain and bitter smart,
That man is blest by love, I swear.
From love all good doth take its start:
Love maketh pure and upright heart.
Then without love how should I fare?
  My lady fair I love right well,
And pure, I know, her love for me;
If aught that's false in my love dwell,
True love surely cannot be.
Thanks for my love she doth compel,
And of her love my song shall tell.
Who holds love ill, a fool is he!

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4. Arida Canities

(*Man seit al für wâr*).

I HAVE heard folk say
This many a day,
Women like not hair that's gray.
Out and away!
Small honour is hers
Who from old lovers is averse
And a young prefers!
'Tis little I care
How gray be my hair,
But women's folly I cannot bear:
New tin is more fair
Than old gold, they profess.
'Tis said they love youths through excess
Of wantonness.

5. April

(*In dem aberellen sô die bluomen springen*)

WHEN April's the season and blossoms are springing,
When limes bud all over and green grow the beeches,
The birds with good reason fall gaily a-singing,
For love, they discover, again in their reach is.
Each finds a mate: then their mirth is great,
Whereat I wax elate,
For all their songs were hushed by winter's treason.

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The sight of the treasures of leaves and of blossoms
On all the boughs springing delighted them dearly.
Their manifold measures once more with glad bosoms
They started a-singing full loudly and clearly,
Both high and low: and I am minded so
To bid farewell to woe.
Meet it is that I should boast my pleasures.
Would that with favour my lady would hear me
And duly admit me, reversing her sentence!
By mine own endeavour I'll perish, I fear me,
Unless she acquit me and take my repentance.
Kind let her be and let my life go free;
'Twas never God's decree
Any man should find death sweet of savour.

6. Winter

(*Swenn diu zît alsô gestât*)

Let once the time of year come round
That brings us grass and flowers again,
Then may a cure be lightly found
For all that filled my heart with pain.
Right glad the little birds would be
If it were summer as of yore.
Though the whole world belonged to me,
Yet would winter grieve me sore!

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RUDOLF VON FENIS

The Desire of the Moth for the Star

(*Mit sange wânde ich mîne sorge krenken*)

With song I thought to ease my sore distress,
So now I sing, "To leave her were no wrong."
The more I sing and think of her, the less,
Alas, my sorrows are dispelled by song!
For Love hath brought me into hope so strong
That now, methinks, its power I can repress
No more, since I have followed it so long.
  Since Love to me such honour would display
That in my heart she bade me bear aright
Her who can turn my grief to joy straightway,
(I were a fool to leave her, in despite!)
To Love I will lament my hapless plight,
For she, who so could wound me, surely may
Yet bid me to the Mansion of Delight.
  I marvel how, though we be far apart,
My lady can so sore torment my peace;
Then I am confident within my heart,
Might I but see her, all my cares should cease!
This thought, when I am with her, brings me ease,
And straight I think my fortune takes its start:—
Then more than ever doth my loss increase.

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When I am with her, I am pained yet more,
As, when a man draws nigher to the heat,
He cannot choose but burn himself right sore:
Just such a fate from her great charm I meet.
My heart, when I am with her, scarce will beat,
And leaving her is death worse than before,
Since looking on her seems to me so sweet.

My lady's beauty, I have well discerned,
Doth work on me as on the moth the flame,
When it flies round it, till it is all burned:
So her great charm betrayed me to my shame.
My foolish heart was bent upon that aim,
And all my thoughts on her so wholly turned
That at the last my fate must be the same.

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ALBRECHT VON JOHANNSDORF

1. The Pilgrimage

(*Ich hân dur got daz kriuze an mich genomen*)

The Cross in God's own service I have ta'en,
And for my sins this pilgrimage I take.
Now may I, if I e'er come home again,
Find her, who suffers sorely for my sake,
In honour still untainted!
So shall God grant me all my prayer.
If with ill ways she grow acquainted,
God send that I may die out there!

2. Uncertainty

(*Wîze rôte rôsen, blâwe bluomen, grüene gras*)

Roses red and white, blue flowers, and grass that's green to see,
Yellow, brown, and red again, and clover-leaf lacked not;
A wondrous wealth of colour 'twas beneath a linden-tree;
Birds were singing up above. That was a lovely spot.

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Side by side they stood, both tall and short, full well accorded.
Still I hope by her whom I have served so long, to be rewarded.
Many and many a day it is since joyous was my song,
And in sooth I know not well what cause for joy is here.
Since I saw my lady last, meseems the time is long;
Yet ne'er she felt the hours go slow for lack of me, I fear.
Until I find her favour I must still restrain my laughter;
Once let me learn what fortune will be mine, and I may laugh thereafter.

3. God's Gifts

(*Guote liute, holt*)

Good folk, go gain
The gifts, which by the Lord our God Himself are given,
Who in His might this world doth hold.
His hire obtain,
Which for the blessèd lies stored up in Heaven
With lasting pleasures manifold.
Gladly for a little bear with suffering sore,
To 'scape from death that lasteth evermore.
God did to you both soul and body give:
Give Him the body's death! So shall the soul for ever live.
Love, release me now!
Free me for a little from thy vassalage!
My reason thou hast robbed from me.
Later on if thou

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Come, when I have finished God's high pilgrimage,
Once more welcome shalt thou be.
Yet, if from my heart thou wilt not be removed,
(Like enough, in sooth, it may be proved)
If to the land of God with me thou fare,
I pray He grant my lady half of all I win me there.
"Alas!" a lady cried,
"What sorrow have I won from what was sweet and dear!
Sweet bliss hath brought me bitter smart.
How shall I abide
Bereft of all my joy, when he hath sailed from here,
Who made me ever high of heart?
Can I face the world and bear my sorrow too?
Sore I need good counsel what to do.
Would I could do what's right in either case!
Ne'er was my need so sore. The hour of parting comes apace."
Blessèd be her name,
Who by her grace and sweetness brings a man to this,
That he bears her o'er the sea!
He must sing the fame
Of his lady, if he e'er hath won such bliss.
For here she bides in misery,
In silence thinking how he's sore bestead.
"Does my lover live, or is he dead?"
So she speaks, "then may my dear love find
With *Him* fair comfort, for whose sake this world he hath resigned!"

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HEINRICH VON RUGGE

"THIS IS A *LEICH*[1] OF THE HOLY GRAVE."

(*Ein tumber man iu hât*)

A WITLESS man supplies
All of you with this counsel wise,
That with a willing mind ye may give heed.
Ye who are wise, attend!
'Twill bring you profit in the end.
What I advise
Is far more wise
Than I, if well ye apprehend.
My foolish mouth would fain
Speak of God's marvels and make plain
To all of you how great they are indeed;

[1] The "leich" is a form of verse derived from the earlier Latin sequences; it does not consist, like the "Lied," of regular and corresponding stanzas but of strophes unequal in length and diverse in structure. The Latin sequences were originally composed on the scheme of an already existent melody; that is to say, the words were in the first instance meant to be an accompaniment to the music and not *vice versâ*. They were, to begin with, religious in character, but later on secular sequences also were written in Latin, and finally German poems were composed after their pattern. These generally, but by no means always, deal with religious themes. The form of the "Minneleich" was first introduced into German literature by Ulrich von Gutenberg, the poet who is mentioned on p. 146, while the oldest religious "leich" in German is this of Rugge's.

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They are most manifold.
Whoso to serve Him now is cold
Is wholly lost,
For to his cost
God's wrath on him must soon descend.
  Now from a witless man receive
A wise man's words and learn them:
Abiding bliss may all achieve
Who to God's service turn them.
So should ye do; to all and some
This my advice is given.
Full many a man for this hath come
Into God's holy heaven.
  So, too, may we!
Prompt will I be
In such great bliss to share.
If I can render service meet,
I shall find favour there.
If I can see
My heart set free,
And foolish lusts forbear,
Forth to those joys my soul will fleet,
That are so wondrous fair.
  Strange tidings reach us from afar;
Ye all have heard them, what they are.
Now, for your souls' salvation
Pray God Almighty every one
(Since on King Frederick hath been done
His will and dispensation)[1]

[1] This refers to the death of Kaiser Friedrich I., in 1190. He died on the Crusade in the June of that year, and on the news of his loss

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That we may find the profit due
For all his service hard,
And many another pilgrim's, too,
Who now hath won reward.
Their souls stand now in God's own view:
He is their constant guard.
We all may buy us even such a dwelling!
And blest is he who for his part
A place betimes doth buy,
Since God doth give so sweet a mart.
Yea, there we find on high
Great joy, with nought to grieve the heart,
To all eternity.
Strive now to win this bliss all else excelling!
Now many folk are sad, we know,
And their dear friends bewail.
Thereof in sooth I am not slow
To tell a different tale.
My counsel I will freely show:
Our hearts must never fail.
That brings *them* joy which brings *us* woe:
Let silence then prevail!
To weep them shows a childish mind:
More cause for weeping might we find
In that we are not where they are: that is a sorrow truly.
This fleeting life is like the wind;
With eyes that see we still are blind,
In that we do not now bring God our constant service duly.

reaching Germany some months later Heinrich von Rugge composed this poem.

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They now are held in honour great;
Now, done with suffering, free from hate,
The soul attains
To bliss and gains
The shining crown of heaven.
He hath achieved how blest a fate
Whom God sets on that seat of state!
There he remains,
And for his pains
A glad reward is given.
A foolish game the devil played:
Our Lord God slept and gave no aid,
For His command we disobeyed.
'Tis through his grace He waketh.
No heed at all to us He gave;
Now will He guard us well and save.
He hath full many a warrior brave.
A coward whom fear o'ertaketh!
Let all good knights now take
The Cross for honour's sake
With manful, brave endeavour!
God's good favour
Now and ever
Upon them doth attend
And constant aid doth lend.
Perchance some craven man, whose breast
Ne'er knew true knighthood, may protest:—
"Here let us bide with no cares to annoy us,
Find sport to employ us,
With ladies be joyous!"
Then she, whose love he craves, will speak:—
"Comrade, his worth is far to seek,

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How should I be a friend of his?
His suit I will dismiss!"
"Dear comrade, I would counsel this.
Fie, that he e'er was born! He's lost
Here and hereafter to his cost."
  Ye valiant knights, now bear ye well!
Blest is his lot who falls where fell
Our Saviour, when
For Christian men
Salvation He provided!
A dread and grievous pit is hell;
Heaven doth for grace all else excel.
Now follow me;
So may it be
That there ye shall be guided.
  For worldly goods full many strive.
An ill return the world doth give;
None knows how long he hath to live.
This sorrow is not small!
Where I am bound, ye, too, I'd send.
Now take the Cross and thither wend,
('Twill bring you profit in the end)
And fear not death at all!
  Rugge, the witless knight, supplies
All of you with this counsel wise.
Should any man these words misprize
Or deem them false in aught,
Then, when in deep distress he lies,
He'll rue that no man may devise
Escape from his iniquities.
Too late he'll take a thought!

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BERNGER VON HORHEIM

SPLENDIDE MENDAX[1]

(*Mir ist alle zît als ich fliegende var*)

EVER I feel that the world is my own,
Yes, and that over it all I can fly.
Lightly I spring where my thoughts may have gone;
Far tho' it be, with a wish I am nigh.
Doughty and strong and light-hearted am I,
Able for aught, and so fleetly I trip it,
Never a beast in the wood could outstrip it.—
Nay, I am heavy as lead: 'twas a lie!
  Truly, for mirth I am like to go mad,
Now that from Love I have won such delight.
Were there a wood of fair trees to be had,
Clean through them all I could pierce with my sight,
Aye, and among them leap high in my might.
Nay, but my mirth it is meet I should bridle.—
I lie, like a fool, and my song it is idle:
Truth to confess, I was ne'er in worse plight!

[1] This poem is an example of the so-called "lügeliet," a form of verse in which a number of assertions patently exaggerated or incredible are made and then finally withdrawn with a sudden acknowledgment of their falseness.

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The Watchers are troubled and vexed in their mind;
Their fury and wrath I have good cause to gain,
Now that my lady is gracious and kind.
Once I was sad; I am glad now and fain.
I ne'er could forget that my heart had one pain,
But now that hath left me and wholly is vanished;
All of my griefs by my mirth have been banished;
Ne'er was such joy—and I lie yet again!
Ever I failed, but I'll win me success
Yet in the sweet prize of love, I declare.
The Watchers are anxious and full of distress,
Now that no longer they hear me despair.
Far from my heart hath she chased all its care.

. . . . . .

God give her grace that my sorrows are over!—
Nay, all's a lie; I have still far to fare!

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HARTWIG VON RAUTE

DESIDERIA

(*Mir tuot ein sorge wê in mînem muote*)

AN anxious sorrow in my heart I bear,
For the dear friends whom I have left behind,—
If they perchance think fondly on me there
As here I have thought on them with steadfast mind.
By Heaven, she ought to show herself more kind,
Since I have always made it my first care
That nought of falsehood in me she should find.
  Now should ye deem my sorrow at an end,
Ye wot not all that on my heart doth weigh.
A grief there is that none on earth may mend,
Save her fair self will do it, as well she may.
Alas, my griefs will never pass away,
Unless she deign her messenger to send,
Whom I have looked for now this many a day.
  Albeit death were close upon my back
And many a bitter hardship in his train,
My lady I would ne'er consent to lack,
Though hard upon my back I saw death plain.
Where many a man confessed his sins in pain,
'Twas *this* that set me most upon the rack,—
That favour from her I could never gain.

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BLIGGER VON STEINACH

Time's Coin

(*Er fünde guoten kouf an mînen jâren*)

Whoso were minded to grow old in pain
Were best to buy the years that I spend here,
For each and all have brought me little gain.
I'd gladly give for *one* of better cheer
Three such as they, their might so much I fear;
And needs I must; what course can yet remain,
When one for faithful service pays so dear?
  If aught of more avail I now might find
To ease the lasting sorrows of my breast
Than constant service, with a willing mind
I'd set to work and show no lack of zest.
If aught it helped me, fain would I protest
That he who for one lady's sake resigned
All others, ought to win his love's request.
  Still by the Rhine that lady might I see
By whom my heart is wounded deep and sore,
Far deeper than a man would mark in me.

. . . . . .

Might she but learn my sorrow, I implore!
As Damas is to Saladin, so she
Is dear to me, aye, and I ween far more!

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DER VON KOLMAS

Toward Evening

(*Mir ist von den kinden dâ her mîne tage*)

My days have flown by with the winds that blow
Since my childhood, aye, and my heart it is woe!
If aught might help me (but help there is none),
No trouble nor strife had been grudged by me.
Unstable is life as ye well may see;
It is put out by death as a candle is done.
Alas, that so seldom we give it a thought!
Ah, that no man hath the power to avert it by aught!
But little we reck with hearts careless and placid,
While in the honey lurks hidden the gall that is acid.
Now happy who strives that life to attain,
Where death not arrives! A lot shall he gain
That never ceaseth to gladden his mind.
There bliss is supreme; love is made not to grieve.
No mortal, I deem, hath wit to conceive
The full perfection of all he shall find.
There is comfort complete, there is absolute joy,
No chimney that smokes, no roof-tree that drips, to annoy.

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No man grows older, though years may pass o'er him.
Then let us go, if God will; we must bow down before Him.
Now let us implore our Lady in need,
That the God she bore in her womb, give heed
And grant us the things we are fain to behold.
The whole world round His will must obey;
No limit nor bound is set to His sway.
Now mark ye the marvel He wrought us of old!
All marvels compared with this marvel are none:
She is the Mother of Christ and His Child, both in one,
And Maiden most pure, with no blemish upon her.
God hath crowned Heaven and Earth with her glory and honour.
We pilgrims make haste; our goal we would win.
My mind sticketh fast in the slough of sin,
Nor out of the mire may I pluck it away.
On a path we fare that all men must go;
We must not forbear to pay what we owe
To the Host who lent it us many a day.
Pay him! This life melts like tin and is gone:
The morning of life is passed by and the evening draws on.
Then let us make speed to secure our salvation!
If the night overtake us in sin, we 'scape not damnation.

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HEINRICH VON MORUNGEN

I. THE LEGACY

(*Het ich tugende niht sô vil von ir vernomen*)

HAD I not perceived so much of worth in her,
Of her beauty had not seen so much,
How could she have ever touched my heart so near?
Now my lot must evermore be such
As befalls the moon, that gets
From the shining sun its light;
So it ever chances,
In my heart her eyes' bright glances
Enter, when she steps before my sight.
  When her bright eyes reach my heart and enter in,
I must needs lament for bitter pain.
Might one 'gainst oneself commit so great a sin,
Mine own self I surely should have slain,
When I took her in my heart
And was fain on her to gaze
(All too fain, I fear me!)
And, if any praised her near me,
Could not choose but add unto the praise.
  I shall make my child heir to this sorrow sore
She hath brought me, and my grief of mind.

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Tho' she fancy she'll be free, when I'm no more,
Yet one comfort I shall leave behind,—
That so fair my son shall wax
He'll do marvels past compare,
Vengeance for me taking,
And her hard heart wholly breaking,
When she sees him grown so wondrous fair.

2. Love's Spell

(*Von der elbe wirt entsên vil manic man*)

Many a man hath been bewitched by elfin eye;
By great love am I bewitchèd so,
By the sweetest lady lover e'er drew nigh.
Now, if she declare herself my foe,
And would work me woe
To satisfy her hate,
Let her grant my prayer! My bliss will be so great,
I shall die for pleasure's overflow!
Mistress to command within my heart she is,
Mightier far than I myself may be.
Ha! that I might have the power to bid her this—
That on bond of troth she stayed with me
Space of days full three,
Aye, and a night or two!
So I should not waste away as now I do.
But, alas, she holds herself too free!
As by fire dry tinder is enkindled soon,
I am kindled by her eyes' bright gaze;

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And her absence makes my heart sink down anon,
Even as water doth with flames that blaze;
And her gracious ways,
Beauty and noble birth,
And the marvels all men tell me of her worth,—
'Twill prove the bane—or blessing—of my days!
When she turns her eyes on me, so bright and keen
That right through my heart they can espy,
If a man confuse me then and step between,
May his joys all perish utterly!
Fain would I draw nigh
To look on my delight,
Even as little birds do in the morning light.—
Shall I e'er be happy by and by?

3. Labour Lost

(*Wist ich obe ez möhte wol verswigen sîn*)

If I thought the secret would be kept by you,
I'd let you see my dear lady's face.
If a man should take and break my heart in two,
Right well he might see her in that place.
Here she came thro' mine eyelids slipping; portal there was none.
Oh, that such a gracious welcome from her love I might find, as she hath done!
If toward a deaf forest many a shout be sent,
Some answer, sure, at the last you'll hear!
Oft and oft I sue her now with fresh lament
Of all my grief, would she but give ear.

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Others too tell her my distresses often in their
song.
Ah, but surely she's been sleeping all this while, or
kept silent all too long!
Parrot, aye or starling, would have learned to say
The word of "love" long ere this right well.
I have shown her service now for many a day:
Can she make out yet the tale I tell?
Nay, not she, save on her God be willing a
miracle to show!
I might easier fell a tree without an axe, and by
praying lay it low!

4. The Triple Alliance

(*Mîn herze ir schoene und diu Minne habent gesworn*)

My heart, her beauty, and Love,—I surely think those
three
Among themselves a league to kill my joys did
swear.
Now wherefore have they chosen out poor single me?
Ah, Love, of my distresses give her, too, a share!
Portion them so that thoughts shall make her colour
flare.
Shall she be heartsick too? Nay, 'twere no just
decree.
Wroth she well might be,
Since command of hers ne'er brought me any care.

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5. Love's Tyranny

(*Owî war umbe volg ich tumbem wâne*)

Alas, why do I follow hope so vain,
Whereby in trouble I am often led?
I parted from her, filled with bitter pain,
That still she left me all uncomforted.
Yet was her face like lilies white and roses red,
And there she sat before me fair and fain:
Like the full moon she showed her beauty plain,
Whereat mine eyes were glad, my heart struck dead!
My constant heart resembles not the wind,
Nor, since she left me, have I changed my will.
From childhood I have kept a steadfast mind,
Tho' oft and often she hath used me ill.
And hidden hope all silently I cherish still:
My folly in her presence I would bind
And store of pretty speeches fain would find;
Yet then to speak one word is past my skill.
So often have I said and sung my thought,
I am hoarse and weary with my long lament.
My labour goes for nought and less than nought,
Since she will not believe my words' intent,
How that toward her my heart in homage true is bent.
Forsooth, I have not prospered as I ought.
Had I to God half such hard service brought,
He would take me to Him ere my days be spent!

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6. Nay and Yea

(*Frouwe, wilt du mich genern*)

Lady, wouldst thou save my life,
Give me one little look, but one!
No more may I endure the strife;
I needs must wholly perish soon.
With a wounded heart I pine;
Lady, this mine eyes have done,
Mine eyes and that red mouth of thine!
  Lady, now my sad case see,
Before I perish thus in pain!
Thou didst speak one word to me:
Prithee, take it back again!
Thou speakest ever "nay" and "no,"
"Nay, nay, nay," and "no, no, no!"
That breaks my heart in twain for woe.
Couldst thou for once but speak me "yea,"
"Yea, yea, yea, yea, yea, yea, yea!"?
That would delight my heart for aye!

7. The Daybreak

(*Owî, sol aber mir iemer mê*)

  Ah me,
And can it ever be
That once more through the night
Her beauty I shall see
Shining than snow more white?

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'Twas that deceived mine eyes;
I thought to see arise
The fair moon in the skies.—
And then day broke.
"Ah me,
And shall he ever see
The dawn break here again
When night is past, and we
No longer need complain,
'Alas, alas, 'tis day!'?
So did he sadly say
When by me late he lay.—
And then day broke."
Ah me,
Again and yet again
She kissed me as I slept!
Her tears fell down amain,
So bitterly she wept.
Yet at my love's behest
Her sorrow she repressed,
And clasped me to her breast.—
And then day broke.
"Ah me,
How many a time he gazed
Entranced upon me there!
And then the covering raised,
So that mine arms all bare
And naked he might see!
A marvel 'twas that he
So pleased thereat could be.—
And then day broke."

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8. The Vision

(*Mirst geschehen als eime kindelîne*)

As a little child, that catches sight
Of its pretty face within a glass shown plain,
Grasps at its own image in delight,
Till at last it breaks the mirror, 'tis so fain;
Then its joy turns all to grief and bitter pain,—
When my love I saw, such was my plight.
Then I thought my bliss could ne'er take flight;
Yet much grief, no less than joy, from her I gain.
  Love, by whom the world is ever blest,
Lo you, brought my lady to me in a dream,
When by sleep my body was possessed.
Thereupon I saw a sight of joy supreme,—
Saw her, o'er all women held in high esteem,
Fairest of them all and worthiest,
Save that her sweet mouth did manifest
Grief . . . and had been hurt, as it would seem.
  With great fear my heart is pierced through,
That her mouth may now grow pale, that was so red,
And for sorrow I lament anew
(Ever since my heart was filled with such a dread)
Such a grievous vision to mine eyes was sped;
As a fond and foolish youth might do,
Who his shadow in a stream doth view
And must fall in love with it till he be dead.
  Nobler ladies and of higher heart
Heaven containeth not from pole to pole.

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I am ever with her, tho' apart
I must bide far from her to my bitter dole.
Out, alas! I thought that I had reached the goal
And in her sweet love had gained a part.
Now I see I am scarcely at the start:
Wherefore all my hopes are fled and bliss of soul.

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REINMAR VON HAGENAU

I. THE DAWN OF DAY

(*So ez iender nâhet deme tage*)

WHENE'ER the break of day draws nigh,
I dare not ask the question, "Is it day?"
This comes from grief so great that I
Can win no help against its cruel sway.
I often think, I lived not in this way
Of old ere yet so heavy on my heart sorrow lay.
Then ever in the morning the birds would make me glad with song.
If she aid me not full soon,
Winter and summer both to me are overlong.
Happy the man who can relate
He left his love in yearning and in woe!
I must lament a different fate;
I ne'er saw woman's tears for my sake flow.
Tho' I were absent long, she ne'er did so.
Often my heart was wounded such sore distress to know.
Had I by any other so long been held of such small worth,
I'd have ceased to struggle on.
No comfort can I find for this on all the earth.

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My lady hath her stock and store
So portioned that the loss falls to my share.
Thereof my heart hath taken more
Than should have come to it, had all been fair.
Yet never will I give this o'er, I swear,
Tho' on her side the tokens of answering love be rare.
She was ever merry, and let me bide in sorrow still:
So the time has passed and gone.
Ah, never dawns the day according to my will!

2. Praesagit Gaudia

(*Ich waen mir liebe geschehen wil*)

Methinks my bliss is drawing nigh.
My heart for joy mounts up on high;
My spirit soars for pure delight
As the falcon in his flight
Or as the eagle glideth.
At home my love abideth.
May she yet by me be found,
As when I left her, safe and sound!
By her side, in sooth, is bliss.
Lord my God, vouchsafe me this,
To see her and relieve her
(If aught there be to grieve her)
From all that causeth her distress.
Grant that I ease her sorrows, and she ease mine no less!

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So may we find our joyance.
Then blessings on the length of night! 'Twill bring me small annoyance!

3. Elegy on Leopold of Austria

(*Si jehent, der sumer der sî hie*)

They say that summer's come this way
And mirth is here again,
And bid me to be merry as of yore.
Now speak and tell me how I may!
Death such a spoil hath ta'en
That I shall ne'er subdue my sorrow more.
What now can I reck of sport or mirth,
Since Leopold, the lord of all delight, is laid in earth?
Never once I saw him sad.
The world hath lost so much in him
That never yet in one man's death such bitter loss it had.
Poor lady, I! My fortune fair
Was ev'n too great, alas!
To think, how all my bliss on him was set!
Now that I shall not have his care,
In misery must pass
Whatever life remaineth to me yet.
Gone the mirror is of my delight,
Which I had chosen for the summertide to glad my sight.

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Therein I have no further part.
When I was told that he was dead,
Up to my soul the blood rushed suddenly from out my heart.
The death of my dear lord it is
Forbids all joy to me,
And joyless must I be for evermore.
Since now there is no help for this,
I strive with misery,
And with lament and grief my heart is sore.
I weep him, weep him ever, I,
For well he cheered me, noble heart, or e'er he came to die.
What do I here now he is lost?
Have mercy, Lord, upon his soul,
For never worthier guest hath come among Thy heavenly host![1]

4. Naturam expellas Furca

(*Des tages dô ich daz kriuze nam*)

When I the Cross began to wear,
Then, as that emblem well beseemed,
I guarded all my thoughts with care,
As pilgrims use; for then I deemed

[1] It has been maintained that in the first stanza of this elegy the poet himself is the speaker, while in the second and third stanzas it is the World who gives expression to the grief she feels at the loss of Leopold VI. Frau Welt is a common personification in the poetry of the time, but the verses do not seem particularly appropriate to her, and it is, I think, much more natural to suppose that Leopold's widow is imagined as being the speaker throughout the poem.

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That I could fix them so upon God's favour,
That ne'er a foot's-breadth from His service they should
waver.
But now a wilful mood they've shown
And rove untrammelled as before.
This sorrow is not mine alone;
It troubles many people more.
In prosperous case I still might be
Save that my thoughts so wildly stray.
They will not lend their aid to me
To serve my God in such a way
As needs I must, to win my soul salvation.
They hark back ever to their ancient occupation,
And fain would have me revel still,
Even as I did in days of yore.
Mother and Maid, avert that ill,
For I can govern them no more!
Yet thoughts I will not so command
As not to let them now and then
Fare forth (for all the world's their land)
Homewards, and so come back again.
When they have borne our friends our love's profession,
Let them return and help atone for such transgression!
May Heaven forgive them all the wrong
That they have done me hitherto!
I fear their folly is so strong
They will assail me oft anew.

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5. Prata virent

(*Ich sach vil wunneclîchen stân*)

I saw the meadow sweetly set
With many a flower red and bright.
Full lovely is the violet;
The nightingale hath conquered quite
The sore distress that did her wrong.
Now vanished is the winter long:
I have heard her song!
  I cast away the care I felt,
When first the green leaves I did see.
Toward me a lady so hath dealt
That evermore my heart must be
Filled full of rapture and delight.
Whate'er she do from morn to night,
I'll deem it right.
  My sorrow she hath all removed,
So that no more I pine and ail.
Four thousand ladies would have proved,
Without her help, of no avail.
Her kindness drives my grief away,
And her true love I am to-day,
Whate'er folk say.
  Henceforth I shall not fear at all
That I may meet with any harm.
Were what I long for to befall,
She soon should lie within my arm

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Her beauty's prize I should obtain;
'Twere sweet, methinks, and I were fain
Such bliss to gain.
That toward her so my heart is bent
Vexes and angers not a few.
I'll never fear their discontent;
They lose their toil whate'er they do.
What profits all their scheming base?
They know not what hath taken place
In this brief space!

6. Spring

(*Ze fröiden nâhet alle tage*)

A joyous season day by day
For all the world with mirth draws near,
Full many a sorrow to allay,
Brought by this wintry time of year.
I, too, am oft in sore dismay,
To see the broad heath lie so drear;
That brings me woe; but soon, I trow,
The nightingale will let us know
The struggle has been settled here.

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7. The Stolen Heart

(*Mîn ougen wurden liebes alsô vol*)

When first my lovesome lady I espied,
Then were mine eyes with joy so deeply fraught
That now and ever must that bliss abide.
Forthwith a miracle of love was wrought:
She came so softly thro' mine eyelids gliding,
She never stumbled in that narrow gate,
But down within my heart she settled straight,
And there I hold that sweet one still in hiding.
Let be! Let be! What wouldst thou, blessèd dame,
That thus thou dost assault me on that spot
Where hitherto no woman ever came
To make assault so vigorous and hot.
Have mercy, lady! 'Tis not fair to fight me;
My heart is subject more to thee than me.
It ought to be with me but 'tis with thee;
So I must wait thy mercy to requite me.

8. Spring Pastime

(*Wol mich lieber maere*)

Oh, the pleasant tidings
I have come to hear!
Winter with his chidings
To an end draws near.

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I can scarce await the day;
Never once have I been gay,
Since on earth the cold frost lay.
  Now tho' mirth elate me,
None need be my foe.
God knows, if men hate me,
Evil hearts they show!
I can do them naught amiss:
If my lady grant me bliss,
Why should any grudge me this?
  If my joy and pleasure
I must needs conceal,
Like a thief my treasure
I should have to steal.
In my prudence I forbear:
My concerns are otherwhere,
Tho' I wander here or there.
  When she would disport her,
Maidlike, with the ball,
May God's grace support her
Lest she trip and fall!
Maidens, let your hustling be!
If you push my love, you see,
Half the harm is done to me!

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SPERVOGEL II.

1. Ill-Luck

(*Daz ich ungelücke hân, daz tuot mir wê*)

Ill-luck is mine, and that hath often made me grieve:
Thus, ere I drunk a drop, a lake I had to leave,
From which a cool stream took its course
And flowed along with mighty force.
Thereat full many slaked their thirst and for the draught felt better.
How oft soe'er *I* dipped my bowl, its lip grew never wetter!

2. The Lot of All

(*Wir loben alle disen halm wand er uns truoc*)

This blade of straw we praise, for produce it hath borne.
The season hath been fair and plentiful of corn,
And glad thereat the world hath been.
Where could a fairer straw be seen?
With plenteous store the rich man's barns and coffers it supplieth.
Then, when it once hath done its part, rotten and foul it lieth.

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3. Clothed in Honour

(*Treit ein reine wîp niht guoter kleider an*)

THOUGH a chaste woman may not wear a costly dress,
Full sure am I, she's clad in her own worthiness,
So that in brave attire she goes,
Even as the sun at morning shows
His bright beams pure and clear. A guileful dame may wear upon her
As costly raiment as she will, scant is her share of honour.

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HARTMANN VON AUE

I. PROCUL ESTE, PROFANI!

(*Dem kriuze zimt wol reiner muot*)

CHASTE manners for the Cross are meet
And virtuous mind.
So may we win us bliss complete
Of every kind.
And for young men it is a chain
Of no frail mesh,
Who are not able to restrain
The lusts of flesh.
Who wears it, must not be
Of conduct loose and free;
If in the heart it fail,
What can it on the dress avail?
  A sacrifice, ye knights, now make
Of life and soul
To Him who suffered for your sake
Both death and dole!
Whoe'er was prompt his shield to use
For worldly fame,
He is not wise if he refuse
To God the same.

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If Fate shall grant him, there
To speed with issue fair,
A double gain is his—
The world's renown, the soul's true bliss.
  To me the world doth beckon back
And falsely smile.
I have followed, like a fool, her track
Too long a while.
Full many and many a day I've run
Her lure to taste:
Where faith and truth are found by none,
There would I haste.
Lord Christ, now help Thou me,
That from the foe I flee
Who sets for me his snare,
Thro' this Thine emblem, which I wear.
  Since death hath stol'n my lord away
And left me lone,
No heed unto the world I pay,
Now he is gone.
The best part of my joys he hath ta'en
With him from hence;
Salvation for my soul to gain
Were now sound sense!
If I by this Crusade
Can bring him any aid,
I'll yield him half the store.
May I see him in heaven once more!

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2. Divided Labour

(*Swelch vrowe sendet lieben man*)

THAT lady who with upright heart
Her love on this Crusade sends forth,
Gains of his meed an equal part,
If she at home preserve her worth
And keep her fame and honour fair.
Here let her pray for both, while he
For both of them sails over there!

3. Dejection

(*Niemen ist ein saelic man*)

NOT a man on all the earth
Is truly happy save him solely,
Who ne'er won aught that's dearly worth,
And turns his heart from such things wholly.
He's free from grief and languishing
Which many a man to death will bring,
When he has fairly earned reward,
Yet unrewarded still must go;
There's nought in life so bitter hard,
As all too well, alas, I know,
For I am troubled even so.
  Misfortune now a greeting sends,
(So sore a grief assailed me never)
That I must bid adieu to friends
With whom I fain would bide for ever.

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By my true faith this sorrow's brought;
Does faith avail my soul in aught?
It gives the *body* nothing more
Save that the livelong day 'tis pined.
My constancy oft grieves me sore:
I cannot banish from my mind
The lady whom I found so kind.

4. High and Low

(*Maneger grüezet mich alsô*)

Friends greet me oft (and truth to tell,
I like that greeting none too well):—
"Hartmann, come, our trade is
To visit courtly ladies!"
Would they would leave me in peace alone,
And to their ladies quick begone!
With such I get no further on
Than standing by them like a stone.
  Towards ladies this is my decree:
I am to them as they to me.
I get more recreation
With girls of humbler station.
I meet with plenty such and find
Among them some of friendlier kind
And just the women to my mind.
To aim too high I'm not inclined.
  For, like the fool I was, one day
To such a dame I chanced to say,—

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"Lady, my heart's endeavour
Is to attain thy favour!"
Then on her face a frown did rise,
So I confess without disguise,
On women I will cast my eyes
Who will not treat me in such wise.

5. The Journey

(*Ich var mit iuwern hulden, herren unde mâge*)

With your good favour, lords and kinsmen, forth I wander.
This land and people, may they prosper well!
Ye need not ask me wherefore I am travelling yonder;
The reason of my journey I will tell.
Love[1] captured me, then on my oath of fealty set me free;
Now hath she bid me, as I truly love her, forth to fare.
'Tis past recall, and I must even journey there;
To break my oath and troth would be right hard for me.
Full many vaunt what feats they would do, if Love would teach them.
I hear their words full well: where are their deeds?
Right fain were I that Love should hearken and beseech them
To serve her, even as I shall serve her needs.

[1] *i.e.* the divine Love as opposed to the earthly Minne of the Minnesingers. Hartmann shows in this and the preceding poem an impatience and discontent with the conventions of the fashionable Minnedienst.

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Who knows true Love for Love's sake fares to strange
lands oversea.
Now mark ye, how she draws me from my home to far-
off coasts!
Lord Saladin, if yet he lived, and all his hosts
Had never made me stir a foot from Germany.
Ye bards of Love, ye oft must suffer sore contrition;
This harm is wrought by hopes that are not sure.
My boast is this: well may I sing of Love's condition,
Since Love holds me and I hold her secure.
Lo, I incline to that which doth no less to me incline,
While ye must often find the hopes ye cherished wholly
vain.
Ye strive for love, which for your service is not fain.
Oh, would ye luckless men might love a Love like
mine!

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DER MARKGRAF VON HOHENBURG

DAYSONG

(*Ich wache umb eines ritters lîp*)

Warder. "Fair lady, for thy honour's sake
And for a knight I bide awake.
Wake him, lady!
God keep him from calamity!
May he awake and none but he!
Wake him, lady!
'Tis close on day:
Make no delay,
I do entreat thee for his sake alone.
Be his defence
And bid him hence!
If he o'ersleep, the fault is all thine own.
Wake him, lady!"

Lady. "A curse upon thee, warder mine,
And cursèd be that song of thine!
Sleep, belovèd!
Thy watching brought me all content;
Thy waking I must needs lament.
Sleep, belovèd!

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Nought hast thou known
Save good alone
At my hands, warder! Ne'er I did thee spite.
Thou long'st for day
To chase away
Far from my heart love's passionate delight.
Sleep, belovèd!"

Warder. "Thy wrath I will not chide nor fear.
Dawn must not find thy lover here;
Wake him, lady!
For he on my good faith relied,
And him to thee I did confide.
Wake him, lady!
Now should it be,
Good dame, that he
Shall lose his life, we too are both undone.
I sing, I say,
'Tis break of day!
Now wake him, else my horn must wake him soon.
Wake him, lady!"

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HILDBOLD VON SCHWANGAU

Now I know Love

(*Ein schapel brûn under wîlen ie blanc*)

A CHAPLET, brown with strips of white between,
Hath brought me joy and made my heart beat high.
By this I show my lady whom I mean,
And she may know who makes me sing, thereby.
To win her favour now shall ever be
Of more account than mine own eyes to me.
May I yet live, her graciousness to see!
'Tis strange, I never felt so sorely tried
When I on *four* belike my service set!
Now I love only one and none beside,
And for that one my grief is greater yet
Than e'er because of love it was of yore.
All that was sport and pastime, nothing more.
Now I know love; I knew it not before!

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WALTHER VON DER VOGELWEIDE

I. CRUSADER'S SONG[1]

(*Allerêrst lebe ich mir werde*)

LIFE'S true worth at last beginneth,
Now my sinful eyes behold
The holy land, the earth that winneth
Fame for glories manifold.
I have won my lifelong prayer:
I am in the country where
God in human shape did fare.
  Lands, the greatest, goodliest, fairest,
Many such mine eyes have seen;
O'er them all the crown thou bearest.
Think what wonders here have been!
From a Maid a babe did spring,
O'er the angel hosts a king;
Was not that a wondrous thing?

[1] An example of the "Kreuzlied" composed to be sung by the whole company of Crusaders—not a personal expression on the part of the poet. It is, however, quite possible that Walther actually went on a Crusade towards the end of his life, in the year 1228, and wrote this poem in Palestine, although there is no positive evidence that he did so. I follow Wilmanns's arrangement of the verses.

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Here He was baptized with water,
That men might be pure as He.
Here He let them sell Him later,
That we thralls might so be free.
We had else been lost, I wis.
Spear, Cross, thorn, your praise it is!
Heathens, woe! ye rage at this.
Down to hell the Son descended
From the grave wherein he lay.
Him the Father still attended
And the Ghost, whom no man may
E'er disjoin; the three are one:
Shaft so smooth and straight there's none,
As to Abraham it was shown.
When He quelled the fiend and ended
Such a fight as king ne'er fought,
Here to earth He reascended.
Sorrow to the Jews it brought;
Through their guard He broke amain;
Living was He seen again,
Whom their hands had pierced and slain.
Here a day of dreadful summons
He appointed for this land.
Orphan's wrongs and widowed woman's
Shall be righted by His hand.
Then the poor man may declare
All the violence he must bear.
Penance here brings blessing there!
That this land they do inherit
Christians, Jews, and heathens claim.

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God adjudge it where the merit
Lieth, in His threefold name!
All the world strives here, we see;
Yet we hold the rightful plea:
God will grant it rightfully.

2. Lord of All

(*Swer âne vorhte, hêrre got*)

Whoso, Lord God, shall feel no fear
To speak Thy ten commandments clear
And break them—no true love does that betoken!
"Father" full many a man calls Thee,
Who for his brother owns not me;
Strong words are these with weak conception spoken.
From the same stuff our body groweth;
Food gives us strength; to waste it goeth,
When through the mouth it takes its way.
Who from the lord can tell the vassal truly,
If he their naked bones should view—
Though in their life the men he knew,—
When worms have gnawed the flesh away?
Jews, heathen, Christians serve Him duly
Who keeps all marvels day by day.

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3. Viaticum

(*Mit saelden müeze ich hiute ûf stên*)

With blessing may I rise this day,
Lord God, to wend upon my way,
And wheresoe'er I ride, do Thou defend me!
Lord Christ, make manifest in me
The fulness of Thy charity,
And for Thy Mother's sake vouchsafe to tend me;
Ev'n as that angel o'er her danger
And Thine kept watch, when in the manger,
Ancient God and Infant Child,
Before the ass and ox Thou layest lowly,
(And yet with heavenly, blessèd care
Gabriel the Good did tend Thee there,
From his trust by nought beguiled),—
So tend me too, that Thy commandment holy
In me be kept all undefiled!

4. Ahi, Constantin!

(*Künc Constantîn, der gap sô vil*)

King Constantine, he gave of yore
Spear, Cross, and Crown, no less, no more,
Unto the See of Rome: I tell you truly.
Aloud thereat the Angel cried:—
"Woe, woe, and once more woe betide!
Once Christendom was governed well and duly.

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Some poison now hath fallen in it:
The honey turns to gall within it.
This soon will fill the world with ruth!"
All princes now live honoured and renowned:
Only the highest is brought to shame.
The priests' election[1] is to blame.
Sweet God, to Thee we cry, in sooth!
The priests would fain the layman's rights confound.—
The Angel told us nought but truth.

5. Confession

(*Vil wol gelobter got, wie selten ich dich prîse*)

Most blessèd God, how seldom dost Thou hear me praying!
Since 'tis from Thee I have my singing and my saying,
How dare I wanton thus beneath the sceptre of Thy swaying?
I do not work good works; I have not true affection,
Lord Father, either for my fellow-Christians or for Thee.
I never felt such love for any as—for me!
Lord, Son and Father, let Thy Spirit give my heart correction!
How should I ever love a man who treats me ill?
To him who's kind I needs must bear a better will.
Forgive my other sins!—in this I'll keep the same mind still.

[1] Refers to the election of Friedrich II. in 1212.

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6. The Fief

(*Ich hân mîn lêhen, al die werlt, ich hân mîn lêhen*)

I HAVE got my fief, good people all, I have got my fief!
No fear now that the frost will bring my toes to grief;
And little will I beg of niggard lords for my relief.
The noble king,[1] the generous king, hath so supplied me
That in the summer I have air, and heat in winter cold.
My neighbours think me far more handsome than of old:
No more they eye me like a bogey now, as once they eyed me.
Do what I would, I was too poor this long while past;
I had a stinking breath, I railed so thick and fast.
The king hath made it sweet again, aye, and my song, at last.

7. No Stronger than a Flower

(*Ich bin einer der nie halben tac*)

I AM one who never yet hath spent
In joy unbroken half a day.
Every joy that e'er to me was sent,
Hath left me now and gone its way.
None may here find joy that doth not fade anon
Like the beauty of bright flowers;
These false joys of fleeting hours
No more I'll set my heart upon.

[1] *i.e.* Friedrich, who bestowed a fief upon the poet, probably in the year 1220.

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8. Flora inter Flores

(Sô die bluomen ûz dem grase dringent)

When from the grass the flowers thrust forth amain,
As though they laughed the flickering sun to greet,
At early morn upon a day in May,
And the little birds in many a strain
Sing as best they can their carols sweet,
What equal joy can all the earth display?
Oh, half and half a heaven is this;
Yet, if I must name an equal bliss,
I'll tell you what I oft have seen
That brought mine eyes yet more delight,
Aye, and would bring them still, I ween.
When a lady high-born, chaste, and fair,
Decked with wreath and raiment doth advance,
Blithe at heart and courteous, not alone,
Midst the throng, to find her pastime there,
And now and then about her casts a glance,
Even as the sun among the stars is shown,—
Though all his marvels May should bring,
Where among them is so sweet a thing
As her most lovesome form and face?
We leave all flowers unheeded then,
And gaze upon the lady's grace.
Come, then, would ye see the truth made clear,
Let us to the festival of May!
For May hath come and with him all his train.

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Look on him, look on gentle ladies here!
Which surpasseth which, I bid ye say!
Have I not chosen the better of the twain?
Alack, if I were bidden so:—
"Take the one and let the other go!"
How very quickly I should choose!
— Sir May, ye must be March again
Before my lady I would lose.

9. Laudabunt Alii

(*Ir sult sprechen willekomen*)

Now let "welcome" be your word!
He who brings you tidings—I am he!
All that hitherto you've heard
Is mere empty air: come, question me!
Yet reward I covet;
If good meed I gain,
Soon I'll tell you what shall make your hearts full fain.
Say, what will ye give to prove it?
German ladies shall be told
Such a tale that they'll please all the earth
Even better than of old.
This I'll do for meed of little worth.
How should they reward me?
High o'er me are they;
So I'm courteous and for this alone will pray,—
That fair greeting they accord me.

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Many lands I've seen and still
Gladly sought the best in every part.
May I meet with nought but ill
If I found that I could bring my heart
Ways of foreign nations
Ever to commend!
What would it avail me falsely to contend?—
Best of all are German fashions.—
There, from Elbe to Rhine and then
Back once more here to Hungarian ground,
Surely dwell the best of men
That in all the world I yet have found.
Sweet ways and fair faces,—
If I'm judge of both,
Women here are better, I will take my oath,
Than they are in other places!
German men are gently bred;
Fair as angels are the maids designed.
He who blames them 's off his head!
There's no other reason I can find.
Love and worth excelling,—
If ye seek that pair,
Come into our land; 'tis ever merry there.
There I fain would make my dwelling!

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10. Crumbs of Consolation

(*In einem zwîvelîtchen wân*)

MUSING I sat, and out of heart,
And thought the while, such grief constrained me,
That from her service I would part,
But yet one comfort still detained me.
"Comfort" 's a name, alack, of which 'tis scarcely worth;
'Tis but the tiniest scrap of comforting,
So tiny that you'll laugh to hear me tell the thing.
Yet no one's glad unless he hath some cause for mirth!
A blade of grass has cheered me now:
It says she'll deign to do my pleasure.
As children oft had shown me how,
Of that small straw I took the measure.
List, now, and mark if what it says of her be true!
"She will, she won't, she will, she won't, she will."
As often as I tried, it came out rightly still.
That comforts me,—although some faith is needed too!

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11. The Evening of Life[1]

(*Ir reinen wîp, ir werden man*)

Ye gallant knights, ye ladies sweet,
Now hath it come to pass that ye
With fuller hand must offer me
Honour and salutation meet.
I have still better right to claim this than of yore;
Give ear, and I will tell you why.
Quite forty years I have sung of love, or even more,
And sung as one should do aright.
Then I was glad thereof and fain:
Now mirth has passed from me to you.
My Love-song be your guide thereto,
And be your favour all I gain!
Let me go, with a staff to aid,
And see if honour may be won,
As from my childhood I have done,
With constant toil, all undismayed.
Ye still must grant me honour, be I ne'er so low;
I'm high enough in my degree.
Sore does that vex base minds; doth it degrade *me*? No!
Good men esteem me all the more.

[1] The poem is somewhat obscure, but it seemed worth while attempting a rendering of it, if it were only on account of its metrical peculiarities—the curious rhythmical effect of the so-called "pauses" and the unusual division of the stanza, in which the two "Stollen" are separated. The form may strike a modern reader as a little bizarre, but it is admirably suited to the spirit of the poem.

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Such worth does lasting honour lend
That highest praise to it we give;
A worthier life no man could live
Than he who's true until the end.
  World, I have marked that meed of thine!
Thou takest all thy gifts from me.
Naked we all depart from thee.
Think shame, if such a fate be mine!
Then would I venture soul and body for thy sake—
'Twas far too much!—time and again.
Worn out am I; now of my years a scoff dost make;
If I wax wroth, dost laugh in scorn.
Nay, laugh, then, laugh a moment more!
Thy day of doom will come anon,
Take from thee all that thou hast won,
And for thy sins will burn thee sore.
  May fortune fair my soul befall!
To many a dame and many a knight
Here on this earth I brought delight;
Would I could save myself withal!
Praise I this earthly love of ours, that grieves the soul;
"'Tis all a lie; I rave," it says;
"Sure is True Love[1] alone," it says, "and sound and whole,
And doth for evermore endure."
The love that leaves thee, leave thou too,
O body! Hold this True Love fast!
What thou hast craved, I see at last
That 'tis not perfect through and through.

[1] *i.e.* heavenly love as opposed to that of the senses.

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I chose me out an image fair;[1]
That e'er I saw it, to my wrong,
Alas, or spake with it so long!
Beauty and speech no more are there.
Some marvel dwelt therein; I know not where it flew,
But straight that image was struck dumb.
So dungeon-drab became its rose-and-lily hue
That scent and sheen did fade and go.
If prisoned in thee here I bide,
Mine Image, let me out, that we
Joyous together yet may be;
For I must once more come inside.[2]

12. Winter and Discontent[3]

(*Diu welt was gelf, rôt unde blâ*)

With gold, red, blue, the world was gay;
The woodland stood in green array,
And little birds sang many a lay
Where croaks the hoodie-crow to-day.
And are its colours different? Yea!
Now is it grown all pale and gray;
Wherefore folk frown in sore dismay.

[1] The "image" is the body; throughout this stanza the Soul is the speaker.

[2] *i.e.* on the Judgment-day; the soul must once more enter the body at the Resurrection.

[3] Walther's "Vokalspiel": each of the five stanzas in the poem is rhymed on one of the vowels.

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I sat upon a verdant lea,
And there, betwixt a lake and me,
Sprang flowers and clover fair to see.
'Tis long since those delights did flee,
For snow and frost now lie where we
Once gathered wreaths from off the tree.
That robs the birds of all their glee.
"Snow, snow away!" the foolish cry.
"Alas, alack!" poor people sigh,
And heavy as lead thereat am I.
Three winter-cares upon me lie,
Yet these and more I could defy
And soon would bid them all good-bye,
If only summertide were nigh.
I'd sooner eat crabs raw, I trow,
Than pass my days much longer so!
O Summer, mirth on us bestow!
You deck the country high and low;
I'd play then with the flowers that blow;
Up to the sun my heart I'd throw,
Which now is pent in winter-woe.
A sloven I've grown, as Esau grew;
My rough hair's tangled through and through.
O sweet Summer, where are you?
Planted fields I fain would view.
Rather than live, as now I do,
Cramped and confined, I tell you true,—
I'd turn me monk at Toberlû!

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13. Love's Coinage

(*Ez ist in unsern kurzen tagen*)

In this short life of ours false coin
Is often struck in Love's design;
Yet if a man know what its real stamp is,
I pledge my word upon the truth of this,
That rudeness shall assail him ne'er,
If he will take it for his guide.
Love is to Heaven so near allied
That I implore its guidance there.

14. Elegy on Reinmar

(*Owê daz wîsheit unde jugent*)

Alas, that neither wit nor worth,
Man's youth nor beauty, on this earth
Fall to an heir when once the body's dead!
At this a wise man well may grieve,
Whose heart the full loss can conceive:
Reinmar, what goodly art in thee hath fled!
Now recompense for this thou shouldst discover,
That thou wouldst never let a day pass over
But thou of ladies spakest fair [and of sweet women's ways].
Though thou hadst sung nought save the single strain,

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"Lady, all hail! how pure a name!" thou wouldst have
won their praise,
So that all women evermore their prayers for thee
should raise.
In sooth, Reinmar, I weep for thee
Far sorer than thou wouldst for me,
If I were dead and thou wert living on.
Upon mine oath I will avow,
Thyself I'd mourn but little now;
I mourn thy noble art, that it is gone.
Thou couldst make greater all the world's enjoyment,
When thou wouldst turn thy art to fair employment.
I weep thy mouth that spake so fair and thy most
tuneful song,
That they have perished ere my days be o'er.
Ah, that thou couldst not wait a little more!
So should I bear thee company; *my* singing's not for
long.
May thy soul come to heavenly bliss, and thanks be to
thy tongue!

15. Daysong

(*Friuntlîchen lac*)

Lovingly lay
A gallant knight and fain
In the arms of a lady. The light of dawn he spied,
As, shining in the distance, through the clouds it
broke.

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In grief the lady spoke,
"Now out upon thee, day,
That wilt not let me longer by my lover bide!
What men call love is nothing but grief and wasting pain."
"Mistress mine, let be
To sorrow and lament!
Since for us twain 'tis needful, from thee I will part.
Now hath the star of morning made all the chamber light."
"Nay, do not so, dear knight!
Speak no such word to me,
Lest thou too sorely trouble and distress my heart.
Where wilt thou haste so quickly? That brings me small content."
"Lady, so let it be!
Awhile yet will I stay.
Now speak and tell me briefly all thy heart's desire,
That we outwit the watchers even as before!"
"Dear love, my heart is sore:
Ere once again with thee
I lie, needs must I suffer pangs of sorrow dire.
Now bide not too long absent! 'Tis for that I pray."
"That can ne'er be so,
Unless I lack the might.
If from thee I should tarry even from noon to noon,
Yet doth my heart, dear lady, stay beside thee still."
"Now hearken to my will!
Dear love, if thou shalt show
True to me and constant, thou shalt see me soon.
Ah, now I mark the daybreak! Sorrow on the sight!"

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"Since I must take my leave,
What solace is for this,
Dear lady, in bright blossoms? They are hateful in my sight,
Even as to birds chill winter bringeth discontent."
"Love, likewise *I* lament,
And never cease to grieve.
How may I live without thee? I know not that aright.
Bide but a little longer! Ne'er have I felt such bliss."
"Lady, I may not rest.
Give me thy leave to fare!
'Tis to preserve thy honour that I would quit thee now,
So loudly hath the warder his song of day begun."
"Love, what may be done?
I yield to thy behest;
Alack, the leave thou cravest I must needs allow.
Now may my soul's Creator keep thee in His care!"
The knight went on his way
In grief and sore distress,
And left the lady weeping woeful and forlorn.
Yet for her love's enjoyment he served her faithfully.
"Whoso is wont," said she,
"To sing the song of day,
Will sorely vex my spirit at the break of morn.
Now here alone I languish sad and loverless!"

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16. Farewell, Proud World, I'm going Home

(*Frô Welt, ir sult dem wirte sagen*)

Dame World, go tell our Host[1] from me
That I have paid him all his claim.
The debt is cancelled; say that he
Must from his ledger strike my name.
Who owes him aught hath cause to sorrow.
Rather than be his debtor long, I'd turn me to the Jews and borrow.
He is quiet till a certain day,
And then he presses for a pledge, if the poor debtor cannot pay.
"Walther, bide here awhile with me!
Indeed, thou hast no cause for ire.
Think how of old I honoured thee
And gave thee all thy heart's desire,
As thou wouldst earnestly implore me.
It grieved me to the heart that I so seldom saw thee come before me.
Thy life is sweet; bethink thee, then!
For, once declare thyself my foe, thou never shalt know mirth again."
Dame World, too long I've sucked thy breast;
I will wean me ere it be too late.
So sweetly have I been caressed
It near beguiled me to my fate.

[1] *i.e.* the Devil, who is imagined as keeping a hostelry where Lady World plays the part of attendant and temptress.

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When face to face I saw thee fairly,
I needs must own without a lie, the sight of thee did please me rarely.
But I beheld such things of shame
When I had marked thee from behind, I have no word for thee but blame.
"Since, then, I may not hinder this,
One last request for me fulfil!
Think upon many a day of bliss,
And come to see me sometimes still,
When hours are dull and slow in running."
In sooth, I should be wondrous glad, save that I fear thy snares and cunning,
From which no man may guard his breast.
God give ye, Dame, a fair good-night! I will betake me to my rest.

17. Elegy.

(*Owê war sint verswunden allîu mînin jâr*)

Ah me, where are my years all gone, without a sign?
Is it real or have I dreamt it, this long life of mine?
And was that really something which once so real I thought?
I have fallen asleep thereafter and have been ware of nought.
Now I am awakened and cannot understand
Things that were once familiar to me as mine own hand.

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The people and the places where my youth passed by,
They are grown strange and alien, as though 'twere all a lie.
They who were once my playmates are listless now and old.
The wood is felled and bare, parcelled and ploughed the wold.
Save that the stream is flowing even as it flowed of yore,
I feel it all too well, my sorrow would be sore.
Old friends pass by, and scarcely a languid greeting spare;
The world is full of trouble here and everywhere.
When I call to remembrance many a happy day
Which like a ripple in the sea has vanished quite away,
Ever more, ah me!
Ah me, the youths and maidens, what sorry lives are theirs!
They, whose high hearts aforetime were little vexed with cares,
Can now do nought but sorrow. Ah, wherefore is it so?
I can find no man happy, wheresoe'er I go.
Sorrow hath wholly banished laughter, and dance, and song;
Never did Christian man see such a woeful throng.
Now mark ye how our ladies are fain to dress their hair!
Mark ye the clownish raiment our gallant knights must wear!

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Letters from Rome have reached us;[1] cruel and harsh are they:
Mourning is granted to us, mirth taken quite away.
It grieves me sore—right gladly we lived in those past years—
That now instead of laughter my portion must be tears.
The wild-wood birds are sad, so sorrowful are we.
What wonder, then, that I am downcast utterly?
Fool that I am! My folly and anger make me rave;
Who follows this world's joys hath lost the joys beyond the grave
Ever more, ah me!
Ah me, how we are poisoned with sweet things, one and all!
Swimming amidst the honey I see the bitter gall.
The world is fair to look on, white and green and red,
But black within and gloomy— the colour of the dead.
Let him it hath misguided his comfort find herein:—
A penance light and easy frees him from heavy sin.
Ye knights, this is *your* duty; take thought and do not fail!
Ye wear the helmets bright and hardwrought coats of mail;
The stubborn shields ye bear and swords made consecrate.
Would God *I* were worthy of that glorious fate!

[1] Refers to the excommunication of Friedrich II. in 1227.

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Then should I, needy wretch, earn a right rich reward;
Yet mean I no broad acres nor gold from any lord.
One of those heavenly crowns I should for ever wear,
Which even the hireling soldier may win him with his spear.
If I on that dear journey might sail beyond the sea,
Then should I ever sing "Good speed!" and never more "Ah me!"
Never more "Ah me!"

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WOLFRAM VON ESCHENBACH

1. DAYSONG

(*Sîne klâwen durh die wolken sint geslagen*)

Warder. "Day's talons, driven
Through the clouds, have come to sight;
It mounts on high in all its strength.
I see the heaven
Paling in the dawning light
Of day, the day that will at length
From dalliance draw the gallant man
Whom I let in with anxious heed;
I'll bring him hence now, if I can;
His manifold valour urged me to the deed."

Lady. "The song thou singest,
Warder, robs me of great bliss
And maketh me to sorrow sore.
Tidings thou bringest
That, alas, are much amiss,
When day is dawning, evermore!
'Twere best no word of such to say;
I charge thee by thy fealty,
And I'll reward thee as I may.
So shall my dear love bide awhile with me."

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Warder. "Nay, he must get him
Hence; he must not linger on.
Sweet lady, give him leave to go!
So may'st thou let him
Love thee all in stealth anon,
And save his life and honour so.
Trust in my fealty did he place,
To bring him hence secure from harm.
'Tis day; 'twas night when thy embrace
And kiss won me to bring him to thy arm."
Lady. "Sing as thou choosest,
Warder, but let him still remain
Who brought love with him, found love here.
Ever thou usest,
Ere the morning-star be plain,
With din to make us start in fear.
Yet never shone the light of day
On him who came to play love's part.
Oft hast thou stolen him away
From my white arms, but never from my heart!"
But when day darted
Bright beams through the glass, and when
The warder sung his warning strain,
In fright she started
For his sake who was with her then.
Her breast on his she pressed amain.
Well did the knight his valour prove
(The warder's song gave cause for dread):
In haste they won the meed of love
With kiss and with caress ere thence he sped.

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2. Nil amplius Oro

(*Ein wîp mac wol erlouben mir*)

A LADY surely ought to let
Me look on her in loving wise.
At her I wish (and none could yet
Forbid that wish) to fly mine eyes.
Am I not like an owl for sight?
My heart sees her in blackest night.
  Her greeting, strong to aid, doth fill
My breast with joy and perfect cheer;
For that I needs must serve her still.
Perchance the day will yet appear
When all the world shall see my bliss.
There have been stranger things than this!
  What harm a stork will do the corn![1]
Ladies by me are harmed still less.
Fain would I 'scape their wrath and scorn.
For her who with unworthiness
Doth treat me now,—I let it be!
Fair courtesy shall be shown by me.

[1] The point, of course, is that storks do no injury to the crops.

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3. The Suitor

(*Ursprinc bluomen, loup ûz dringen*)

Leaves are thrusting, flowers are springing,
And the breath of May to birds their music hath restored.
I can sometimes fall a-singing
Though the frost lie thick and thou, fair dame, give no reward.
But the forest minstrels,—*they*
Sing in no man's ear, once half the summer's passed away.
Glittering flowers shall shimmer fairly
Far and wide, made brighter by the hanging drops of dew.
Clear-voiced birds, they carol rarely,
While their young they rock and cradle all the Maytime through.
Never drowsed the nightingale.
Now I waken up again and sing by hill and dale.
For thy grace my song shall sue thee.
Aid me, dearest lady, now, since now is time for aid!
Service I have offered to thee
And shall offer till I die. Then, let me be repaid!
Solace let me win from thee,
And from my weary lamentation set me free!
Let my service now discover
Whether it will please thee yet, such joy to me to lend,
That my grief be given over
And my constant wooing win from thee the longed-for end
Thy fair grace hath proved so strong
Upon my heart, that songs I sing thee short and long.

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From thy charming indignation,
Lady, and thy sweetness too, much grief I have endured.
Wilt thou give me consolation?
By one helpful word from thee I should be lightly cured.
Drive my cares away, that I
May yet be glad and high of heart before I die!

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NEIDHART VON REUENTHAL

I. Nunc Pede libero pulsanda Tellus

(*Der walt stuont aller grîse*)

The forest high and low
Was gray with ice and snow;
Now from end to end 'tis bright.
Mark it right,
Maidens gay,
And where the flowers are, dance to-day!
  Many a little bird
In sweet song I heard
Carol on the branches green;
I have seen
Flowers fair.
Its bright robe the heath doth wear.
  I love the dear Maytide.
'Twas then my love I spied
Dancing in the lindens' shade.
Green leaves swayed
Round the spot,
And from her kept the sunbeams hot.

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2. Spring, the Sweet Spring

(*Ûf dem berge und in dem tal*)

Down the vale and up the hill
Once more the song of birds sounds shrill.
Clover green
Again is seen.
Winter, off, with all thy teen!
  The trees stood bare and gray of hue,
Now birds on all their branches new
Perch and play.
All is gay.
Gifts for this are due to May.
  An ancient dame, who day and night
Had fought with death a stubborn fight,
Gave a leap
Like a sheep,
And pushed the young folks all in a heap.

3. The Dance

(*Kint, bereitet iuch der sliten ûf dax îs*)

Girls, fit out your sledges for the ice and snow!
Winter, sure, is bitter chill.
He hath taken from us many a sweet and lovely flower.
Bare and hoary branches now the green limes show.
All the wood is hushed and still.
That hath come upon us from the frost's ungracious
  power.

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Do you see how he hath marched o'er dale and down?
He it is hath made them pale.
Now, too, every nightingale
Far away hath flown.
  Much I need my friends to give me counsel wise;
What the matter is, I'll tell.
I would have them show us where the girls may go to
    play.
Megenwart has got a room of goodly size;
There, then, if it likes you well,
We shall hold a merry dance upon our holiday.
If we go, his daughter will be glad indeed.
Tell each other near and far!
Round the table Engelmâr
In the dance will lead.
  Go to Kunigunde: she'll be nothing loth;
Dance was ever to her mind.
We shall be upbraided sorely, if she be not told.
Gîsel, go to Jiute's quick, and tell them both!
Ella must not stay behind.
I have made a solemn covenant with them of old.
Don't forget, my girl, to summon Hedwig now!
Bid her hasten with them there.
Say, their caps they must not wear
Low down o'er the brow!
  I will give this counsel to all womankind
Who may there be pleased to show
Favour unto gallant men, and of their good fame reck:
Let them wear them high in front and low behind,
That their necks be covered so.
What good is a casque without a collar round the neck?

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Women's *heads* from harm have ever been secure;
Broken heads they need not fear,
And the hurts they get elsewhere
Have not proved past cure.
. . . [Eppe, he pulled Geppe out of Gumpe's arm,
Aided by his flail-pole stout.
With his plough-staff Master Adelber soon set things straight.
'Twas an egg that Ruprecht found caused all the harm,
('Twas the devil's gift, I doubt)
For he threatened he would throw it at him, sure as fate.
Eppe, he was both a bald and angry man;
"Do your worst!" he fiercely said.
Ruprecht threw it at his head
Then, and down it ran.
Friedelieb with Götelind was fain to go.
Engelmâr had planned the same.
I will tell you, if you like, the end of the affair.
Eberhart, the farmer, made it up, and so
To an end the quarrel came.
But for him their hands had been fast in each other's hair.
Like two silly geese they march, as like can be,
Face to face the whole day long.
He who led off with his song,
Friderich was he!][1]

[1] The two last stanzas evidently belong to some other poem, and seem to have been inadvertently attached to this.

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4. The Message from Abroad[1]

(*Ez gruonet wol diu heide*)

The wood's new leaves do glitter;
The meadow once again is green.
The winter keen
Was for both right bitter.
But now the time hath changed once more.
My longing sore
Calls my lady to my mind; and hard it was to quit her!
  The season's transformation
Makes the little birds sing high.
And fain would I
For the delectation
Of my friends now sing a strain.
My songs here gain
No heed from the foreign folk. All hail, thou German nation!
  To my dear one's dwelling
I would send an envoy who
That village knew,
(Mark the tale I'm telling!)
Where sad I left her, to depart,—
Her whom my heart
Hath not swerved from once, in love and constancy excelling.

[1] This poem seems to have been written by Neidhart just before his return from a Crusade, probably in the year 1219; the envoy addressed in the later stanzas is no doubt a poetical fiction.

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Haste, this message taking
To my dear friends across the main!
With bitter pain
My love-sick heart is aching.
Tell them all from us, I pray,
Full soon would they
See us yonder, if broad seas between us were not breaking.
To my mistress, tender
All zealous service from my part.
To her my heart
Faithful love shall render
Henceforward and to none but her.
I'd far prefer
All my gains to lose, before her love I would surrender.
To friend and relation
Say I prosper well, in sooth.
And if, good youth,
They make interrogation
About us pilgrims, how we fare,
Why then, declare
Paynim folk have pressed us hard and sore is our vexation.
Do thy office featly!
Make good speed and serve me true,
For after you
I shall follow fleetly,
As swift as ever I can be!
God grant that we
Live to hasten home again! that day would dawn full sweetly.

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5. Solvitur acris Hiems

(*Nu ist der küele winder gar zergangen*)

"Now chilly winter's vanished altogether;
Short nights are here, long days, and sunny weather.
A joyous season now doth bring
Delight once more to everything.
Never have I heard the birds so sweetly sing.
  Now to our eyes a lovely sight uncloses;
The heath displays a wondrous wealth of roses.
The flowers thrust through the grass anew;
Rarely the meadow dripped with dew,
Where for a wreath my lover plucked them as they blew!
  The wood forgets that it was gray and blighted,
For May upon a green branch hath alighted,
And store of leaves he now hath won.
Comrade, put thy head-dress on!
Well thou knowest, I go to meet a knight anon!"
  The maiden's mother heard that in her hiding.
Quoth she, "These lies of thine there's no abiding!
Giddy art thou past compare.
Bind a kerchief round thy hair!
Join the throng, but never a dress thou'lt get to wear!"
  "Mother mine, who gave this right unto you,
That for my raiment I should have to sue you?
Ne'er a thread you spun for me.
Let your rage and bluster be!
Quick, unlock the door, I say! Where is the key?"

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A chest there was; the dress lay locked within it.
A chair-leg burst it open in a minute.
The dame ne'er felt so sore a stroke.
When her press the maiden broke,
Hushed was her tongue and never a word she spoke.
She lifted out the smock without delaying;
It lay there, many a little fold displaying.
Her girdle was a riband small.
To the knight of Reuenthal
The merry maiden flung her speckled ball.

6. Facilis Descensus

(*Mîne tage loufent von der hoehe gegen der neige*)

From their height to their decline my days are swiftly speeding.
Lady, give me comfort while I stand upon the height!
If I show thee constant love, then hearken to my pleading;
Do not let my rivals' malice bring me to despite!
Sorrows thick because of thee upon my heart come thronging.
Lady, make them cease, I pray,
Ere my fond youth pass away
In grief and bitter longing!
The better and the better my fair love doth ever please me,
The less and less do I please her; in sooth, I like that ill.

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If I am glad, 'tis that a darling hope doth ever seize me,
Since as for grace and favour, she withholds them from me still.
Hope and comfort, while I live, I never shall surrender;
Never yet I dreamt of that,
When my love before me sat
Like the full moon in splendour.

7. Maecenas, atavis edite Regibus

(*Fürste Friderîch*)

Frederick, royal knight,
If I only thought I might
Beg a tiny house, in which
I might keep my coffer, rich
In the store of silver that thy bounty deigns to give,
I would beg for this!
Do not take my prayer amiss!
For I suffer in thy land
Scorn and threats on every hand.
I will try my utmost to deserve it, while I live
Here beneath the skies.
When I die, to God that's o'er us
I will sing thy Song of Praise among the heavenly Chorus,
So that far and wide thou shalt be known in Paradise!

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DER TRUCHSESS VON SANT GALLEN

THE WORLD IS ALL A FLEETING SHOW

(*Betrogeniu Welt, dû hâst betrogen*)

DECEIVED World, thou hast deceived
Me, and before me many more.
Through thee I am of Him bereaved
Who once, to win me, suffered sore.
Alack, I break faith with myself! Now I petition,
Merciful God, send me for this such true and firm contrition,
That this World's service I resign,
And so with Thy sweet Mother's aid may win me yet that everlasting meed of Thine!
Well for him who on what he was,
And is, and shall be soon, dares think!
He looks in a deceitful glass
Who from such timely thoughts doth shrink,
And for eternal joys doth not make ready duly,
Since how soon death may come there is no man that knoweth truly.
This warning I myself do need;
Yet even tho' I forget it, surely it were well if other folks thereto gave heed!

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If a man know, yet will not know,
His own hand deals him death and shame.
I hold such wisdom like the show
Which from the puppets takes its name.
While they are worked, strange marvels there we may discover;
But he who does not see betimes how soon the show is over,
How like a dream it fades away,—
He may be sure that, if our teachers do not lie, both here and there he's gone astray.
One good I know and one alone:
Would that I had that good in sight!
The sweetness of that good is shown
At break of day and fall of night,
And every hour between them, safe from all disaster.
Of that same good I pray that my Creator make me master.
Our goods are fleeting, even as we;
Now give me, Lord, a share of that fixed, steadfast good, or poor for ever must I be!
Whenso the Lord of Lords shall come
And wrathfully demand His due,
He shall fulfil His righteous doom.
Now turn thy thoughts, frail World, thereto!
Be sure, for all He suffered, vengeance then He seeketh.
Let all good men bethink them of that passage where He speaketh:—
"Ye righteous, go to My right hand!
Ye who denied Me service there, must to the left, accursèd in the fire to stand."

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I know not any gifts so fair
As those God gives us to possess.
With all our frailties He doth bear,
In that we live in wickedness.
He gives us life, He gives us wealth, He gives us honour,
He gives us hearing, sight, and sense; of what more is He donor?
The beasts He gives us, wild and tame.
All things that fly and swim He puts beneath our sway; give not to Him, and great's the shame!
But little while those pleasures please
Whereon the world sets highest store.
A life of perfect bliss and ease,
Lo, how it fleets and is no more!
He who to-day soars high in bliss beyond all measure,
To-morrow in his dearest joys belike can take no pleasure.
This is a grief unequallèd,
That we think nought thereon; yet at the last there's no tale told of us save "He is dead!"

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GRAF VON LEININGEN

Five Words

(*Swes muot ze fröiden sî gestalt*)

Let him who is in merry mood
Look now upon the green, green wood,
And let his heart be gladdened
To see May's meinie dressed aright
In colours brave and raiment bright.
No more the birds are saddened;
Their hearts are high, and o'er and o'er
  We hear their sweet notes ringing
Loud and strong, right musical;
The nightingale above them all
On the green bough is singing.
  But sore I grieve, as well I may;
A tax of all my mirth I pay,
While still so cold I find her
Who holds my heart through good and ill.
Ah, that she lets me sorrow still!
So fairly God designed her
That 'tis past my wit to think,

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And past my heart's conceiving,
How yet fairer she might be,
That lovesome lady, served by me,
Who turns my mirth to grieving.
O Love, sweet Counsellor that thou art,
All bliss be thine, Queen of my heart,
So thou wilt now befriend me!
Give counsel, O most lovesome Love,
That my distress she may remove
And aid at last may lend me!
Since thou dost hold in bondage fast
My thoughts, my heart's desire,
Come, counsel me betimes, for thou
Art all my hope and comfort now.
I burn in thine own fire.
Now if I needs must leave her so,
And her fair favour quite forego,
I'll journey, sad and mournful,
Unto Apulia, woe is me!
Sweet lady, grace! and do not be
Towards me so harsh and scornful!
A little milder prove at last
And let thy red lips clearly
Speak to me five words, no more,
Which will enrich my pleasure's store:
"Good fortune speed thee fairly!"
"Good fortune now thy journey speed!
God guard thy life and soul at need!
Honour and fame attend thee!
Heaven knows, I would beseech thee yet
To stay, if prayer, command, or threat

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Of mine had power to bend thee.
But since thy journey nought may stop,
  Two woeful hearts thou bearest
With thee thither, mine and thine!
Wherefore I ever grieve and pine.
Christ guide thee where thou farest!"

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CHRISTIAN VON HAMLE

HER FEET HAVE TOUCHED THE MEADOWS

(*Ich wolte daz der anger sprechen solte*)

I WISH the Mead could utter words of reason
Like the parrot in his glass![1]
Then it would tell me what it felt this season
And how overjoyed it was,
When my lady there did pass
Gathering flowers, and her fair feet tripped over
All its green and gentle grass.
How great, Sir Meadow, must have been your pleasure,
When my lady, passing o'er,
Stretched her white hands out to grasp the treasure
Of the lovely flowers you bore!
Sir Mead, now grant me, I implore,
With my feet those self-same spots to cover
Where my lady trod before!
Sir Meadow, pray that my hard lot she soften,
That lady whom I think so sweet!

[1] *i.e.* glass cage.

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So will I wish she yet may wander often
Over you with naked feet.
Then you'll laugh at snow and sleet.
All my heart will blossom like your clover,
If one kind look from her I meet.

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ULRICH VON LICHTENSTEIN

I. As a Dream doth Flatter

(*In dem walde süeze doene*)

Now the little birds are singing
In the woods their carols gay.
Fair flowers in the meadow springing
Bloom to meet the light of May.
So my heart in bliss supreme
Blooms with thoughts her grace engendered;
Rich thereby my soul is rendered,
As a beggar by a dream.
  One high hope I ever nourish
When I think how sweet she is,—
That my fortune yet may flourish,
That she yet will yield me bliss.
Happy in that hope am I.
Grant me, heaven, its consummation!
This entrancing expectation
May she ne'er to me deny!
  Never could my love deceive me;
Free from every fault is she.
This dear prospect let her leave me,
While no happier I may be,—

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That my bliss may long endure,
That I may not wake up weeping,
But may laugh, the solace keeping
Which her favour would ensure.
  Longing and sweet contemplation
Make my pleasure's greatest gain.
I shall keep this consolation
While she lets me, with those twain,
Come to her and take my rest,
To my heart thus freely granting
Bliss and rapture so enchanting
She must be for ever blest.
  Blessèd May, thou and no other
Fillest all the world with glee.
Thou and all the world together
Bring no scrap of joy to me.
Say, what pleasure could ye give,
Were my lady dear denied me?
Let her comfort keep beside me,
For by that alone I live!

2. Love and Laughter

(*Wê war umbe sul wir sorgen?*)

Wherefore, wherefore should we sorrow?
Mirth is right.
Ah, from ladies let us borrow
Heart's delight!

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Blest is he who wins this treasure
From them: he hath fortune fair.
They must make us fain of pleasure,
Since high honour, too, is there.
  Cherish dance and song and laughter
For their sake!
Who their favour followeth after,
Let him make
Service true his heart's endeavour.
He may prove thereby his worth.
He who grudges that will never
See his mourning changed to mirth.
  Water quenches every glimmer
Of the fire.
Never doth the sun grow dimmer
And expire.
What I tell you is no fiction:
Hark and make this truth your own!
Worthy men from sore affliction
Can be freed by women alone.
  Lady Love, my heart is yearning.
Woe, ah woe!
Feel how hot my breast is burning!
Chilly snow
Needs would burn with all the fervent
Fuel that on my heart is laid.
Love, if thou canst love thy servant,
Come betimes and lend me aid!

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3. The Praise of Love

(*Vrowe schoene, frouwe reine*)

Lady fair beyond all measure,
Lady sweet and pure and kind,
Still thy heart beats high for pleasure;
Still Love troubles not thy mind.
Once thou learnest Love's fierce might,
Thy soft mouth, so red and bright,
Straight shall sigh from morn to night.
"Knight, what is this Love's true nature?
Is it man or maid, in sooth?
Tell me of its form and feature.
Never could I learn the truth.
What it is I pray you tell,
Yea, and what it doth as well,
So that I may 'scape its spell."
Lady, Love hath such ascendant,
And it bears so wide a sway,
Every land is Love's dependent.
Of its nature this I say:—
'Tis a friend and 'tis a foe;
It can work both weal and woe.
Love is fashioned even so.
"Knight, if pining thoughts and sadness
Love is able to dispel,
If it fills the heart with gladness,
Teaches grace and courtesy well,
Oh, if Love can do all this,
If its might so sovereign is,
Great indeed must be its bliss."

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Lady, let me end its praises:
Love's reward is full of mirth.
Happiness it gives, and raises
Men in honour and in worth.
Whomsoe'er it will requite,
To his heart and to his sight
It dispenseth all delight.
"Knight, how may I win its guerdon,
How deserve its favour high?
If I must endure the burden
Of sore grief,—too weak am I!
Nay, I will not suffer pain.
Tell me, knight, how shall I gain
Love's reward, for which I am fain."
Lady, let our hearts be plighted.
Love me well, as I do thee!
Let us twain be so united
That one flesh and soul we be.
Be thou mine, as I am thine.—
"Knight, that is not my design.
Be ye yours, for I am mine!"

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BURKHARD VON HOHENFELS

Poor and Content

(*Ich wil reigen*)

"I'LL dance a measure,"
Said a gladsome maiden gay.
"Little pleasure
Have I had this month of May.
But now my term is ended,[1]
And glad am I.
Now shall my cheer be mended;
My heart is high.
I'd rather have a crown of straw and feel I'm free
Than wear a rose-wreath, if they set a watch o'er me!"
"Have compassion,"
Her companion cried, "on me,
That God did fashion
Me so rich! I would that He
Had made me poor, up yonder!
Oh, were I poor!

[1] *i.e.* the term of service during which she was pledged to stay in her place: the first speaker is a serving-maid.

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Then with you I should wander;
'Twere merry, sure!
I'd rather have a crown of straw and feel I'm free
Than wear a rose-wreath, if they set a watch o'er me!
Sore my distress is
Here, since my aunt keeps from me
My pretty dresses
Guarded under lock and key.
She says, if I grow tearful,
'Love's in my head!'—
'Love's the cause,' if I'm cheerful.—
Would I were dead!
I'd rather have a crown of straw and feel I'm free
Than wear a rose-wreath, if they set a watch o'er me!"
"If you sorrow,
What avails your beauty fair?
Come to-morrow
With me! Drive away your care!
I'll teach you—come, be merry!—
To reap the corn.
We'll stop, if we grow weary;
No need to mourn!
I'd rather have a crown of straw and feel I'm free
Than wear a rose-wreath, if they set a watch o'er me!"

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"I know surely
How to pay her out, you'll see!
I'll peep demurely
At the youths who ogle me.
She never yet would let me
Smile to a knight;
A lowly swain I'll get me,
Her heart to spite!
I'd rather have a crown of straw and feel I'm free
Than wear a rose-wreath, if they set a watch o'er me!"

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BURGGRAF VON LUENZ

In a Palace Tower

(*Er gienc ein juncvrou minneclîch*)

A WINSOME maiden took her way
Where on the tower the Warder stood:
"Now if a man steal here to-day,
Dear Warder, let thy heart be good!
Accost him gently, 'Who goes there?'
And be not overbold withal,
But promptly own his right to fare,
If 'yes' he answers to thy call.
Show him the casement then with speed:
So mayst thou win my lady's meed."
  But little time thereafter sped,
When to the spot the gallant came,
And "Who goes there?" the Warder said,
Eager his promised hire to claim.
"'Tis I, and love is what I crave;
Look up, good Warder of the door!"
"The prize of love ye well may have,
But bide without a moment more."—
A gracious welcome soon was his:
Her rose-red mouth he 'gan to kiss.

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"Ye may not check the rising morn,"
The Warder shrill struck up his song.
"I warn ye, as I needs must warn,
Who longer sleeps will sleep o'erlong.
Right loth were I to bear the fault,
If lovers twain should come to woe.
No man may make the day to halt;
I see the star of morning glow.
Even as 'tis wont, it glitters bright.
Now waken, waken, gallant knight!"
The lady shrank in sore surprise
When so she heard the Warder's lay,
And lovingly she spake, "Arise,
Dear knight, arise, for lo, 'tis day!
To me o'er other men thou'rt dear;
Even so do thou toward me incline!
I hold thy heart beside me here
And gladly will I give thee mine,
Commending thee to God on high.
It grieves me sore to say good-bye."
Therewith the gallant bade adieu,
From his dear lady to depart,
Even as fond lovers needs must do;
And sore they felt love's bitter smart.
A sweet exchange they 'gan to make,
And many a kiss between them passed.
Her heart on his was like to break,
And in his arms he held her fast;
For after weal comes ever woe.—
That knight departed even so.

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GOTTFRIED VON NEIFEN

I. THE OBSTACLE

(*Rîfe und anehanc*)

RIME and frozen dew
Have gripped the heath completely;
Its bright colours gay
Drear and sad are grown.
The birds' carols, too,
(They sang for joy full sweetly)
All are hushed to-day.
And the wood I bemoan,—
Stripped of everything!
Yet cause of grief still richer
She to me doth bring
Who carries in her pitcher
Water from the spring; all my thoughts she doth subdue.
Her jug I chanced to break,
Just as the spring she quitted.
'Twas a glad surprise
My dear love to see.
No reproach she spake,
And off my cares all flitted!

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Then in loving wise
My sweetheart said to me :—
"'Tis your doing, sure,
That such sore trouble meets me.
Much I must endure,
So ill my mistress treats me.
Five times yesterday I was beaten for your sake!"
"I will set you free,
If only you'll obey me.
Fly with me and leave her!
Then none can use you ill."—
"No, that cannot be!
I'd sooner have you slay me!
I should lose for ever
My mistress's good will.
A shilling and a smock
She owes me for wages;
I have taken stock.
I'd not see them for ages!
Let me once get *them*, then you'll get your wish from me!"

2. Summer

(*Sol ich disen sumer lanc*)

If with children I must be
Plagued this summer season,
And may never hie away
To dance by the linden-tree,
I am vexed with reason!
Oh, I'd sooner die to-day!

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Hushaby and lullaby!
When will day draw nigh?
Baby, baby, I will rock thee; baby, do not cry!
Take the baby in your lap,
Nurse, and hush its crying,
If you've any love for me.
Help me in my sore mishap!
You alone from sighing
And from cares can set me free.
Hushaby and lullaby!
When will day draw nigh?
Baby, baby, I will rock thee; baby, do not cry!

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ULRICH VON WINTERSTETTEN

Lost Labour

(*Sumer wil uns aber bringen*)

Summer brings again before us
Trees in leaf and birds in chorus;
Flowers are come to clothe the plain.
Forth from winter's fetters sally
Heath and meadow, hill and valley:
Roses red are seen again.
All the world to mirth is turning;
Only I alone am mourning,
Since my lady in her scorning
Deals my heart such bitter pain.
    He who sings a weary time
    Disregarded, unrewarded,
    Wastes in vain full many a rhyme.
  To the world I'll make confession
That she lives in deep transgression,
Whom I served so constantly.
All my cares are of *her* making;
'Tis for her my heart is breaking.

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That is what she will not see.
How should she do penance ever?
She hath smiled upon me never;
So 'tis best that we should sever.
I shall bid good-bye, and flee.
He who sings a weary time
Disregarded, unrewarded,
Wastes in vain full many a rhyme.
Lady, who beyond all measure
Once did fill my heart with pleasure,
Hearken to my last, brief strain!
You are fair, indeed, yet beauty
Oft to pride will pay its duty;
This, alas, in you is plain!
To a lady worthier, sweeter,
Who can make all joys completer,
I will turn my song, and greet her.
Her now will I serve full fain.
He who sings a weary time
Disregarded, unrewarded,
Wastes in vain full many a rhyme.
Worthy Love, thou must be humbled!
Since within thy bonds I stumbled,
Little heed to me thou hast paid.
From my song I get small profit;
Not a word thou hearest of it.
Never have I found thine aid.
With a wound my heart is bleeding,
Which from sparkling eyes came speeding;
I received it all unheeding.
Service here were fitly made,

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He who sings a weary time
Disregarded, unrewarded.
Wastes in vain full many a rhyme.
Love, my wounds—I bid thee heal them!
'Twas thine arrow that did deal them
In its swift and sudden flight.
By two eyes am I enchanted,
Which o'er two bright cheeks are planted,
And beneath them—what a sight!
Two red lips that burn like fire
Took me captive with desire:
Never shall my love expire;
Through my heart her gaze did smite.
He who serves a lady pure
Well may merit to inherit
Fair reward at last, be sure!

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REINMAR VON ZWETER

I. MARIA

(*Ez ist vil manegem minner leit*)

THERE'S many a lover likes it ill
If others serve his lady and solicit her good-will;
For he alone would serve her, only her, for grace and greeting fair.
Ye Christians, let your zeal be great,
And haste to serve *my* Lady! serve her early, serve her late!
For it will please me well, if she will set you free from all your care.
No servant to another show ill-feeling!
Let them shun all lewd thoughts and evil dealing!
She is pure; no impure thought comes nigh her;
True love dwells with her constantly.
From blemish she is wholly free.
Blest man, who once is kindly greeted by her!

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2. Nelle Scuole d'Amor che non s'apprende?

(*Alle schuol sint gar ein wint*)

No schools of ours are good for aught,
Except that school alone in which we see Love's pupils taught.
Needs must we grant the palm to that, of such fair lessons is it full.
Its rod can tame the rudest boor,
So that he understands what he ne'er heard or saw before.
Where else hath any man beheld or heard of such a goodly school?
Love teaches us fair courtesy to render;
Love teaches store of sweet discourse and tender;
Love teaches bounty all unsparing;
Love teaches valiancy of heart;
Love teaches youths to play their part
And in the lists to show a knightly bearing.

3. The Wardrobe

(*Was cleider vrouwen wol an stê*)

What raiment suits a lady best?
That lesson I will teach you: first of all a snow-white vest;

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That is, that she love God and hold Him dear; this piece is bravely wrought.
O'er that a gown shall be designed,
So that both weal and woe she bear with calm and equal mind.
Love be her girdle, and its clasp delight in noble deed and thought!
Let Honour be her mantle, whose protection
Shall hide all blemishes of imperfection;
Her veil be Faith that changes never;
O'er that a chaplet of so fair a style
That it shall keep her free from guile.
O blessèd Dame, her fame is fresh for ever!

4. Dame Honour

(*Diu Êr was wîlent alsô wert*)

Honour of old had such high praise,
For otherwise men sought her than they seek her nowadays;
And whoso dared to bid her to his house, was held in honour high.
If anywhere she failed to meet
A hospitable host, she sped away with nimble feet;
No man would dare to do her disrespect or show discourtesy.
But now, should any man show but a tittle
Of love to her, in service great or little,
With grateful mien would she regard him.

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The smallest boon she prizes much;
If one will deign to grant her such,
Down to the ground she bows her, to reward him.

5. Gallinae Filius albae

(*Her Han, ich wil iu siges jehen*)

Sir Cock, to you I yield the prize;
Right valiant are you, as I oft have witnessed with these eyes.
O'er all your wives—and they are not a few—you hold a sovereign sway.
I'm blest with but a single wife,
And she has robbed me of my wits and spoilt all joy in life;
She's mistress in the house, and scolds me if I grow a little gay.
If I had two, then were my laughter finished!
If I had four, my cheer were sore diminished;
If I had eight, how could I 'scape perdition?
They would devour me on the spot.
Sir Cock, yours is a blessèd lot:
A dozen hens you keep in full submission!

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6. The Making of Dice

(*Der tiuvel schuof das würfelspil*)

THE devil hath invented dice
To capture many souls and make them his by this device;
The Ace he made because there is one single God omnipotent.
Heaven and Earth, they both are laid
Within His hand, and after this design the Deuce he made.
From the three names of Christ, our sweet, true Lord, the Three he did invent.
The Four he formed in cunning imitation
Of the Evangelists' association;
The Five, man's senses five resembling,
So to corrupt and do them wrong;
The Six, that he may six weeks long
Lure us from penance by the love of gambling.

7. Personal

(*Von Rîne sô bin ich geborn*)

I CAME to birth beside the Rhine;
In Austria passed my youth; Bohemia I have chosen for mine,

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More for the Master's[1] sake than for the land's, though both of them are good.
The Master's good, his land no less;
Yet there's one thing in both I'm sore ashamed of, I confess:
'Tis that none, or none but he, pays me the honour that he should.
Were I with God Himself in holy Heaven,
I'd deem it wrong and hard to be forgiven,
If honour scant His angels paid me.
I've managed now the King to get,
But not the Knight nor Castle yet;
His Bishop and his Pawn do nought to aid me!

8. Shipwreck

(*Diu werlt gelîchet sich dem mer*)

THIS world of ours is like the sea,
Which ever waves and rages, high and irrepressibly.
Just so waves and rages this our world, and just the same its plight.
As for the heathen, I am dumb!
My plaint is that the Christians now to such a pass are come,
That they are like to perish, if they be not saved by God's great might.
If by such perils they be long attended,
We shall be shipwrecked e'er our journey's ended.

[1] King Wenzel I. of Bohemia.

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We swim the breakers of transgression;
The primates with their crooked staves
Fish but for gains among the waves,
Nor for the souls in sin make intercession.

9. I am the Master of my Fate

(*"Beschaffen" unt "ez muoste sîn"*)

"'Twas fated" and "It was to be,"—
With those two, foolish people cloak their shame that's plain to see.
"'Twas fated" and "It was to be" to no man's honour do despite.
Whoso neglects his honour due
And loses it, can therefore have no right to blame those two,
"'Twas fated" and "It was to be"; here 'gainst that plea I come to fight.
"It was to be" and "So for me 'twas fated"—
By many an ape I hear those reasons stated,
His heart such cheating pleas supplying,
That he does deeds of sin and shame
And says that Fate is all to blame,—
"'Tis not his fault!" By heaven, the fool is lying!

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10. RIDDLE

(*Ein sneller wol gevierter wagen*)

A WAGGON, squarely-built and strong,
Runs swiftly on twelve wheels, and has for ages borne
along
Two and fifty ladies, set in order on it one and all.
The waggon never halts nor slacks,
But presses swiftly onwards in its own appointed tracks.
It is not hewn of wood, 'tis not too short, too long, too
broad, too small.
With constant toil 'tis drawn, where'er its course is,
By seven white and seven sable horses.
Who will tell me now the meaning of this waggon?
God grant that man a happy year!
The waggon has been told you here.
It runs on till its master puts the drag on.

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DER MARNER

1. Riddle

(*Ich spür ein wunder dur die lant*)

I NOTE a strange thing in all lands:
Yellow and green its hue doth shine;
It has not feet nor eyes nor hands,
Yet lives 'mong men and may incline
Either with rich or poor to dwell.
It binds men oft, though not with bands:
It sails the Danube and the Rhine;
Lordly raiment it commands,
And with princes drinketh wine.
It slinks where ladies are, as well.
It dieth here and waxeth there; it stirs unceasingly:
To the first maiden did it slink upon a tree.
The fourth part of the world it slew,
And still doth slay
Fools every day,
A steer sans horn.
It hath reft mortals not a few
Of bliss, life, soul, and made them mourn—
What is this creature, can you tell?[1]

[1] The answer seems to be "envy."

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2. The Minstrel

(*Sing ich dien liuten mînin liet*)

When I'd sing to the folk's content,
The first would hear full fain
How Dieterich from Berne was sent;
The next, of Rother and his reign;
The third would like the Russian Fight; the fourth would hear of Eckhart's woe;
The fifth, of Kriemhild's false intent;
The sixth would hear again
Whither the folk of Wilzen went;
The seventh demands another strain,—
Heime's and Witchen's strife, Sir Egge's death or Siegfried's long ago;
The eighth, again, nought but the Courtly Minnesong would hear;
All this is tedious to the ninth, it would appear;
The tenth, he does not care!
Now this, now that; now thus, now so; now to, now fro; now here, now there!
Many would hear the tale of Niblung's treasure-hoard of old;
My words they hold
Not worth a doit, I'm told.
Their hearts are buried in the gold.
As lead thro' marble tries to bore, my song in many an ear is trolled.
Thus, much I sing and say to you, though ne'er the king hath charged me so.

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DER HARDEGGER

I. Illuc unde negant redire quemquam

(*Ich bin ûf einer verte dâ mich niht erwenden mac*)

I am bound upon a journey whence nought may turn me back,
And every day towards the goal I ride along the track,
Be it dry or be it wet,
Aye, though the streams be up and overflowing.
I do not fear the murderers, no, not a whit, in sooth,
Nor yet the robbers on the roads; trust me, 'tis the truth!
Though kings be wroth and princes threat,
I cease not for an instant in my going.
Lords, to check me, forth may fare,
And barons, who above us hold ascendant;
Each to other let them swear,
With them their loyal vassals too, down to the last dependent;
Nay, all the strongholds on the earth belike might bar my course:—
Nought could mislead me from the path
Which all unwillingly I take perforce.

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2. The Snare

(*Ez wirt vil tiere in drûhen und in stricken oft ersnellet*)

In springe and net full many a beast and bird is taken lightly;
This comes to pass because they know not where the snares do lie;
For well I wot, if they could read the hunter's purpose rightly,
Never one of all the tribe were caught and doomed to die.
Thereby more foolish than the brutes I deem that mortals be:
The trap's two jaws they mark full plain—
The body's death, the soul's sure bane,
And yet from fears lest they may trip their hearts are wholly free.

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REINMAR VON BRENNENBURG

I. Beauty and Charm

(*Diu Liebe zuo der Schoene sprach "ich bin gewert*)

Said Charm to Beauty: "Many a good and gallant knight
And many a gentle lady, too, I hold in my subjection."
Said Beauty: "Higher honour still is mine by right,
Since by the fair delights I yield I prove my worth's perfection."
Said Charm: "When I subdue a heart,
It deems me sweet and fair as well, and loves me very dearly."
Said Beauty: "Nay, a thief thou art,
While plain to view I show my joys and ever act sincerely."
Said Charm: "Nay, I can lock together two in one,
Nor canst thou e'er unlock them then, though like the sun
The beauty shine and glow upon thy visage fair.
I go before, thou comest behind, and so I lure thee in Love's snare."

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Said Beauty: "Since, then, Lady Charm, such power is thine
O'er the sweet bliss of love, how can it be that thou shouldst show it
In such strange wise, by making lovers sigh and pine
Beneath thy tyrannous rule? What is the cause? I fain would know it."
Said Charm: "I'll tell thee how it is:
No heart can bar me out; clean through the door I pass securely."
Said Beauty: "If thy plan be this,
Then praise and fair renown from far and wide I merit surely."
Said Charm: "I tell thee, sweet and kind as well am I!"
Said Beauty: "I am justly held in honour high."
Said Charm: "'Tis I who hold the keys of love's delight."
Said Beauty: "I have turned to joy the heart of many a noble knight."
Beauty and Charm, a couple meetly matched is this,
Aye, better than the ruby bright in the pure gold imbedded!
Beauty sans Charm must ever lack love's highest bliss;
Blest is the man in whose embrace the two are sweetly wedded!
Beauty and Charm to lovers' eyes
Are dear, and dearer yet to hearts in whom Love's fire is lighted.
Beauty and Charm win honour's prize,
When with true faith that never swerves the two are found united.

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Beauty and Charm—that is a lovesome lady fair!
Beauty and Charm—that is the power dispels all care.
Beauty and Charm drive all my dismal thoughts away,
For Beauty makes me all elate, Charm glads the heart a better way!

2. Souls of Poets Dead and Gone

(*Wâ sint nu alle die von minnen sungen ê?*)

Where are they all who sang of Love in days of yore?
Now most are dead, who brought the whole world mirth beyond all measure.
Friend of St. Gall, at thy decease my heart is sore;
I grieve for thee; thy jests made many a man laugh out for pleasure.
Reinmar, full many miss thy strain;
For thee I weep; my master of the Vogelweid's another.
Of Love there sang right sweetly twain—
Heinrich of Rugge one, and Neuenburg's worthy lord the other.
Von Johannsdorf, and Frederick of Hausen too,—
Well did they sing; in song they were good knights and true.
Walter of Metz, Rubin, and one was Wachsmut hight;
Ulrich von Gutenberg, thy song brought many folk a deep delight.

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TANNHÄUSER

I. The Grateful Lover

(*Min frowe diu wil lônen mir*)

My lady will reward me,—she
Whom I have served this long time past.
You all must thank her now for me,
Since she has proved so kind at last.
She wants me first to turn the Rhine
Away from where Coblentz doth stand,
And then she'll own herself for mine.
If I can bring her that sea-sand
From where the sun goes down afar
To rest, she'll yield me all I crave.
Hard by that spot there stands a star,
And this my lady needs must have.
    I hold this view,—
    Whate'er she do,
    I can't but think it fit and due.
    To guard herself from me, 'tis true, she hath
        striven.
    Save for God in Heaven
    There's no one knows to whom my love is given.
  If I'm to win her, from the moon
I first must steal its light away.

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Let me dig up the earth, and soon
My service she will richly pay.
If like a starling I could fly,
She'd do my pleasure, it appears;
If eagle-like I soared on high,
Or if I broke a thousand spears
At once, like Gahmuret of yore
In that great joust at Kanvoleis,[1]
She'd grant me all that I implore
And I should win a precious prize.
I hold this view,—
Whate'er she do,
I can't but think it fit and due.
To guard herself from me, 'tis true, she hath striven.
Save for God in Heaven
There's no one knows to whom my love is given.
If I can steal the water's rush
From Elbe, she says, she will be kind;
If roaring Danube I can hush,
The goodness of her heart I'll find.
I first must fetch—'tis her decree—
The salamander from the fire;
My lady then will smile on me
And grant me all my heart's desire.
If rain and snow I can compel
To cease,—I have her word for this—
And summer and the flowers as well,
I may attain to perfect bliss.

[1] The reference is to Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parsival*, Book ii.

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I hold this view,—
Whate'er she do,
I can't but think it fit and due.
To guard herself from me, 'tis true, she hath striven.
Save for God in Heaven
There's no one knows to whom my love is given.

2. Virtus post Nummos

(*Hie vor dô stuont mîn dinc alsô daz mir die besten jâhen*)

Of old my case was such that men of worth conceded to me
I was the best of company; well would my kinsmen treat me.
They turn their backs upon me now, who once were blithe to view me;
And now that all my wealth is gone, I find them slow to greet me.
I must make way before that man—so altered now my case is—
Who once made way for me; before me now he proudly paces.
Now all are hosts, who then were guests of mine and failed me never;
And yet, though twenty years have past, I'm the same man as ever.
Now guest, not host, am I; through ups and downs our life is guided.
If any thinks it nought but ease, let him do just as I did!

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So now that Fortune's rough to me, wherever I may wander,
My thoughts all turn to Nuremberg; 'twere a snug place to dwell in,
For there the people know me well: I should have plenty yonder,
While here with strangers I have naught,—'tis simple truth I'm telling.
Of much I did in former years I have repented later;
If I had known what now I know, my wealth might now be greater.
I knew not mine own self and oft I've smarted for it fairly:
That's why the stranger to my house is bidden now so rarely.
"Come, go your ways, Sir guest!" say all, and so they set me speeding.
I wot not who would envy me this life that I am leading.

3. The House-Builders

(*Ich denke, erbûwe ich mir ein hûs nach tumber liute râte*)

Now should I build myself a house, as silly folk have prayed me,
Here are the names of those by whom I'm like to be assisted:
Sir Need and Master Work-at-naught will promptly come to aid me;
One Ne'er-get-on, who knows me well, will likewise be enlisted.

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Sir Want and Master What's-to-do are servants sure
and steady;
And many a call is paid me by Sir Loss and Sir
Unready.
And once this troop has built my house and in it I
entrench me,
Be sure the snow will find a way into the room to
drench me!

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WALTHER VON METZ

The Flowers' Defect

(*Heten nû die bluomen den gewalt*)

If the flowers we pluck this virtue had,
That they varied at their will,
Suiting men and women well or ill
As the wearer's heart was good or bad;
  Women then men's nature might descry,
Men might judge of women too;
Then would all who were not pure and true,
Have to wear their wreath of flowers awry.
  No such power, alas, do they possess!
All who please may pluck them now.
So with many a wreath that decks a brow
Rudeness, too, is shown and wantonness.

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RUBIN

1. Dame Fortune

(*Nieman an fröiden sol verzagen*)

No man should ever quite despair,
Though in hard case he chance to live.
His griefs discreetly let him bear;
This counsel to myself I give.
Dame Fortune's shyer than a deer,
And is my foe as well, I fear.
I ever follow up her tread
And near her have I often drawn,—
Then with her wiles she speeds ahead!

2. Coelum non Animum mutant

(*Ich wil urloup von vriunden nemen*)

Now from my friends I'll take my leave
But with my body, not my heart.
I should be loth to have them grieve;
May they be happy for their part!

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May I return to find them free from suffering!
Since friends' departure such a bitter grief doth bring,
Then friends' return must bring a heart-felt joy no less.
This comfort still shall comfort me in my distress.
  That I must journey far away,
And that so soon it needs must be,—
Who'll tell her what I fain would say,
Who'll give her greeting fair from me?
That far from her with eager longing I depart,
And that I love her still with true and constant heart,—
Whoso should tell her that, may fortune fair be his!
I'll never cease to bless him in my heart for this.
  "No parting ever brought me dole
Like this, now that he fares from hence.
I give him all my heart and soul
To be his succour and defence;
And give him of my pleasures, too, an equal share,
That he may win salvation for us both o'er there.
And though to where I am his eyes should fail to see,
Let him gaze with his heart, not with his eyes, at me."

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WACHSMUTH VON MÜHLHAUSEN

WISHES

(*Wâ gesach ie mannes ougen*)

WHERE did ever mortal eye
See two lovelier cheeks displayed?
Lily-white, without a lie,
Sweetly, featly are they made.
Long and pale and gold 's her hair.
If hers and mine the whole realm were,—
I would give no one else a share!
  From my lady's lips a kiss
Softer burns than any blaze.
Should she grant a mortal this,
He'd be happy all his days.
Help me wish now, all of you,
That I get a kiss from her!
Then—something else I'll wish thereto!

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DER VON WILDONJE

WHERE IS FANCY BRED?

(*Wir suln hôhen muot enpfâhen*)

NOW let mirth possess us wholly,
Knights and ladies, every one!
Thou shalt quit me, Melancholy,
Now that I have looked upon
All the loveliness of Spring;
For 'tis May, and in the meadows
Little birds are heard to sing.
  They rejoice to see the beaming
Sun come o'er the hill to view.
Is there aught of lovelier seeming
Than a rose among the dew?
Nought, except a lady fair,
Who with womanly grace and sweetness
Decks her beauty past compare!
  In the eyes love first abideth;
Then it enters in the heart.
Straightway love to love confideth,
"Love, would I were where thou art!"

. . . . . .

This song on the woodland borders
By a little bird was sung.

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DER VON SUNECK

Il disiato Risu

(*Vil süeziu Minne, du hâst mich sô betwungen*)

Sweet Love, thou hast constrained me so that I
Must sing of that most lovesome lady's grace,
Toward whom my heart hath striven constantly.
Down through mine eyes she sweetly glides apace,
To my heart's deepest chamber softly sped;
Since none could e'er conceive, save God o'erhead,
Such lovely laughter from a mouth so red.

In Germany or lands where strangers dwell
Was lady ever seen so kind and fair?
Pure as an angel, she is guarded well.
With her can nought in all the world compare.
Where find a dearer lady in her stead?
Since none could e'er conceive, save God o'erhead,
Such lovely laughter from a mouth so red.

When first I saw how sweet she was and pure,
I took her for an angel fair to see.
From her, methought, all joys I should secure;
Then did she bind me in great misery.
I dreamt not she would cast me in bonds so dread,
Since none could e'er conceive, save God o'erhead,
Such lovely laughter from a mouth so red.

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KÖNIG KONRAD DER JUNGE[1]

A Child in Years

(*Ich fröwe mich maniger bluomen röt*)

I JOY in flowers red and bright,
Which May will yield us soon in store.
They stood but now in woful plight,
For winter brought them sorrow sore.
But now with many a joyous day
Maytide will give us recompense,
And therefore all the world is gay.
  What help from summer do *I* get
And from the days so long and light?
My hopes of comfort all are set
On one who grieves me day and night.
That lády now would prove her worth,
If she would make me glad of heart;
Then should I come to real mirth.
  When to my love I bid good-bye,
No joy in life is left me, none!

[1] This is the ill-fated Conradin, who was defeated at Tagliacozzo in 1268 and beheaded a short time after, before he had completed his seventeenth year.

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Alas, for grief I am like to die,
That such a suit was e'er begun!
A strange thing Love to me appears;
Lady, for this I suffer sorely,
That I am but a child in years!

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BOPPE

I. God's Grace

(*Ob al der werlte gar gewaltic wær ein man*)

THOUGH over all the earth a man held sovereign sway,
Though he had powers more marvellous than tongue could say,
Though problems never solved he could unravel;
Though Fortune bore him up aloft to Heaven's height,
Though he could mark, and test, and number, too, aright
Each separate star, each grain of ocean gravel;
And though his strong and valiant hand
Could lay a thousand giants low in slaughter;
Though rocks and hills at his command
Fell down; though he could win from earth and water
And air and fire all they bring forth
From lowest depths up to the sun's high station;
And though a wife of peerless worth
He wedded for his mirth and delectation,

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One fairer than the fairest, chaste and gentle in behaviour;
And though till thousand years were past
His life should last,—
What were all that, unless he gained the grace of God, his Saviour?

2. The Empty Purse

(*Ob in vünf landen ûz erwünschet waer ein helt*)

Though from five lands a perfect knight were chosen forth,
Fair of his face, and dowered with every gift of worth,
Generous and true and in his promise stable;
Though he could rhyme and play and read and write,
Could hunt with hawk or hound, and shoot and fight,
And to wield weapons, one and all, were able;
Though he were versed in all the lore
Of magic books and arts of necromancy,
Could play the harp, and furthermore
Sing cunningly all songs of mirth and fancy;
Though he could cast the stone of weight
Full twelve foot further than it e'er was landed,
And boasted of a strength so great
That he could fell a wild bear single-handed;

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Though ladies gave him greeting fair and set high hopes
upon him;
Though all the seven arts through and through
That hero knew,—
Yet, if his purse were bare of pence, all would be wasted
on him!

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DER WILDE ALEXANDER

1. The Rose

(*Ern kan niht wol rôsen pflegen*)

Who from his roses wards the rain,
So that their shoots no moisture gain,
He cannot tend the rose.
On roses there should fall the dew
And after that the sunshine too;
So may their buds unclose.
A rose there is—I weep her yet!—
Within so dense a thicket set,
No joys may come anear.
Her hapless case she must bewail;
Her crimson hue will soon grow pale,
Unless the ground's made clear.

2. Days of Childhood

(*Hie bevor dô wir kint wâren*)

We were children once together
In the time of summer weather,

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And we scampered out to play:
Through the fields we took our way.
Violets grew in masses
There, 'mong grasses
Where the oxen tramp to-day.
  Down we sank in grass and clover,
I remember, to discover
Which flower was the fairest one.
Then our childish faces shone,
With fresh garlands glancing
In our dancing.
So it is the seasons run!
  Then, while yet the sun shone brightly,
Through the bush and brake we lightly
Ran among the fair beech trees,
Searching for wild strawberries.
There a keeper noted
Us, and shouted:
"Run home, children, if you please!"
  So we stained ourselves all over,
Picking berries in the cover;
'Twas a childish pastime dear.
Then we heard a voice sound clear.
'Twas our shepherd, calling
Out and bawling:—
"Children, there are snakes in here!"
  In the brushwood one child darted;
With a cry of fright it started:
"Oh, a snake ran there by me!
And it bit my horse; now he

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Won't get well, no, never!
May it ever
Live in grief and misery!"
"Come now, do not be unruly!
Quick and leave the wood, or truly
Yours will be a woeful plight!
If you linger here till night,
Dearly you'll repent it
And lament it!
Run home, then, with all your might!
Once, you know, five maidens,[1] straying
In the meadows, stopped there playing
Till the king had shut the door.
Then they wept in sorrow sore,
When the prison-warders
By his orders
Took off all the clothes they wore!"

[1] A somewhat vague reference to the parable of the foolish virgins.

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STEINMAR

VINO PELLITE CURAS

(Sît si mir niht lônen wil)

SINCE she, whom I've served so long,
Won't reward me for my song,
Look you, I will flatter
One who takes my cares away,—
Autumn, who the dress of May
Off the boughs doth scatter!
Well I know, it is an ancient saying,—
Luckless loverlings the martyr's part are ever playing.
That same yoke with them I bore:
Aha!
Now I'll carouse and stay with them no more!
Autumn, o'er the sunny May
I will help you win the day,
If for friend you take me.
By your aid my cares have fled;
Now that Gebewein is dead,
Your retainer make me
In his place, though I am but a novice.
"Look you, Steinmar, when I see you're fitted for the office

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And well can praise me, so I will!"
Aha!
I'll sing now till we all have drunk our fill.
Autumn, hark what life I lead!—
Host, come serve us fish! Make speed!
Ten kinds, aye, or twenty!
Geese, fowls, peacocks, game, and swine,
Sausages and foreign wine
Let us have in plenty!
Now pile the dishes up! Give us good measure!
I'll clear the plates and drink the cups out to the dregs with pleasure.
Host, give all your sorrows o'er!
Aha!
There's nought like wine to ease a heart that's sore.
Freely put in everything
Lots of spice and seasoning,
Such a heat begetting
That clouds of steam may rise aloft
Like smoke, with every cup that's quaffed,
And that we fall a-sweating
Until we fancy 'tis a bath we're taking.
Fill our mouths with fragrant scents, as of a druggist's making!
If the wine robs me of my speech,
Aha!
Host, pour it into me, I do beseech!
Host, through me a road doth run;
Prithee, set good store thereon,

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Every sort of victual!
Wine enough to drive a wheel
That same road would gladly feel.
Troth, 'twould hurt me little
With such a throat a fair fat goose to swallow!
Dearest Autumn, in your train as servant let me follow!
My soul 's perched on a rib of mine;
Aha!
She's hopped up there to 'scape the flood of wine!

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FRAUENLOB

1. Dux Femina Facti

(*Adâm den êrsten menschen den betrouc ein wîp*)

ADAM, the first of men, a woman did beguile;
A woman's wile
Robbed Samson of his vision,
Brought David to derision;
And Solomon, the loved of God, through one came nigh
perdition.
Absalom's beauty 'gainst a woman's wiles was unavailing.
This fate the mighty Alexander, too, befell;
Virgil as well
By woman's craft was cheated,
Holofernes defeated,
And Aristotle by a dame was mercilessly treated.
A woman razed the town of Troy and filled the land
with wailing.
Achilles' lot was just the same;
The savage Asahel grew tame;
King Arthur's shame
From woman came;
Parzifal sorrowed for a dame.
Since Love has always been to blame,
Tho' a woman burn or freeze my heart, what cause have
I for railing?

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2. Good Counsel

(*Ir edelen sûzen vrouwen gût*)

Ye noble ladies, sweet and kind,
Preserve your ancient high estate!
And whoso bears no knightly mind,
Hold him for ever in your hate!
If courteous heart a knight shall show,
'Twas ever gentle ladies' way
To greet him fairly every day.
Dame Fortune shall attend you so!
  Dame, since thy looks entice and charm,
(The cause thereof from nature came)
I'll teach thee how to 'scape from harm
And ever keep thee clear of blame.
Let not thy looks too forward be,
Save where a chaste and virtuous mind
And knightly bearing thou shalt find;
Then let thy gaze be fair and free!
  Now should a worthless churl, who ne'er
Hath risked his life, the prize to gain,
Nor in the tourney borne his share,
A lady's grace as well obtain
As one who boldly ventures this,
And life and lands will gladly stake,
In sport or earnest, for her sake,—
That were a practice much amiss!

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HEINRICH VON BRESLAU

THE PLAINTIFF

(*Ich klage dir, meie, ich klage dir, sumerwunne*)

I SUE to thee, May, I sue to thee, Summer-mirth,
I sue to thee, broad and glittering Heath,
I sue to thee, Clover bright to the eyes,
I sue to thee, Wood, and Sun that shinest on the earth,
I sue to thee, Venus, sick to death,
My love torments me in such wise.
If I by you were aided,
I think my mistress might be well persuaded
To guide herself by Love's decree.
For God's sake let me tell you all my sorrow,
And help me 'scape this misery!
"How doth she use thee? State thine accusation,
So that we put her not to shame
Without just cause; that is but fair."
Her grace I win in fond imagination,
But if I make a further claim,
She says that while I live I ne'er
Shall get from her such treasure;
And that is death to love's true ease and pleasure.

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Alas, that e'er I saw her face!
To me, who love her with a love so faithful,
She deals discomfort and disgrace.
"I, May, will issue orders to my flowers,
The roses red, the lilies white,
To close themselves when she is by."—
"So will I, Summer-mirth, use all my powers
That the small birds, who give delight,
May hush their song, if she be nigh."—
"I, the broad Heath, will watch her,
And when she comes for my bright flowers, will catch her
And hold her prisoner fast.
Be war declared by us upon thy lady!
So must she show thee grace at last."—
"I, Clover bright, will shine so fiercely on her,
That if her eyes my flowers shall see,
She'll look asquint at such a glare."—
"I, Woodland green, will fling my leaves upon her,
If e'er she come to visit me,
Unless she give thee greeting fair."—
"I, Sun, will pierce with fervour
Her heart and brain; no sunshade shall preserve her
From being plagued by such a heat,
Unless she quit thee of thy heart's affliction
And show thee love and friendship sweet."—
"I, Venus, if she will not use thee better,
Will render hateful in her sight
All things that love hath framed so fair."—
Nay, I would rather die at once than let her
Be parted so from all delight,
Though she hath grieved me past compare.

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"Let me avenge thine anguish,
And in the paths of pleasure shall she languish
And deem them wearisome and sad."—
My tender love could ne'er endure such harshness;
Nay, let me die, so she be glad!

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HERZOG JOHANN VON BRABANT

At Early Morning

(*Eenes meienmorghens vroe*)

At early morning I arose
On a day in May,
And to a pleasant orchard-close
I would go to play.
There I found three maidens gay;
One by one they sang this glee:
Harbalorifee, harbalorifee, harbalorifee![1]
When I saw the plants that sprang
In the orchard there,
And hearkened to the songs they sang,
Those three maidens fair,
My heart grew blithe and free from care,
And I, too, must sing this glee:
Harbalorifee, harbalorifee, harbalorifee!
Then to one I made salute,
The loveliest to view!
Round her waist my arm I put
Without more ado.
Fain I would have kissed her too.
Quoth she then, "Let be, let be!"
Harbalorifee, harbalorifee, harbalorifee!

[1] Probably meant to suggest the accompaniment of a musical instrument.

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KÖNIG WENZEL VON BÖHMEN

"I DID NOT BREAK THE ROSE"

(*Ûz hôher âventiure ein süeze werdekeit*)

FROM high emprize a glory sweet and excellent
Within me Love to light hath brought;
I sigh for heart's delight, whene'er I call to mind
How, for love's sweet distress, Love did to me present,
Even as my heart had fondly sought,
A gentle lady, whom I vaunt o'er all her kind;
Yet is she safe from being wronged by me, I swear.
She gave me bitter woe along with pleasure fair:
This evermore I needs must bear.
Who takes it ill, I little care!
'Twas my heart bade me get to know my lady dear,
(Blest am I, blest for evermore!)
My whole desire, my bliss complete, mine eyes' delight.
When through mine eyes she came and reached my heart in here,
More eagerly than e'er before,
Aye, and too long, I wooed that charming lady bright.

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My heart and soul I gave to her in service true,—
To her, from whom my joys all took their rise and grew.
She hath made me, my whole life through,
Glad, yet I suffer for it too.
  Even as a rosebud, which from out its sheath slips forth,
Because it craves the fresh, sweet dew,
She offered me her mouth all sugar-sweet and red.
No bliss that ever mortal won is aught of worth
Compared to that, from her I drew
Such aid and solace; ah, that hour unequallèd!
Never could mortal man conceive or fully say
What living bliss her grace brought to the light of day.
Pleasure with pain was chased away,—
The pleasure sad, the pain was gay.
  With wantonness Love cannot charge me, surely not!
Although I held in close embrace
Her lovely form, fresh, tender, dear and sweet,
To wrong her modesty my will ne'er strove a jot,
Save that my lady in her grace
Came to my heart and entered in with love complete.
This will of mine brought both my heart and eyes distress;
Wroth was my body, that I shunned that sweet caress.
'Twas perfect love that did repress
The deed, and her pure worthiness.
  Now praise to him, who tends his lady even so
As I that dainty fruit and rare!
I did not break the rose and yet I had the power.

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She held my heart and holds it still, where'er I go.
When I recall her, sweet and fair,
Joys come upon me then in such a plenteous shower
That, for my dear delight, I cannot speak and tell
That perfect bliss, that dawn of day desirable.
No mortal's lot could e'er excel
Mine, when my lady used me well!

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HADLAUB

1. The Proxy

(*Ach ich sach sî triuten wol ein kindelîn*)

Ah, I saw her fondly pet a little child,
And that beguiled the pain I had.
Round its neck she put her arms and pressed it tight,
And at the sight my heart was glad.
Its face between her two white hands she drew,
Pressed it to her mouth and cheeks, so clear and soft,
Alack, and oft she kissed it too!
Straight it did as I'd have done in such a case,
And did embrace her once again.
Well it seemed to understand its wondrous bliss,
Its joy in this appeared so plain.
I thought, while envy in my heart alit:
"Oh, now would that I that little child might be!
So sweetly she caresses it."
When I saw the child run from her, quick as thought
I rose and caught it, as it came.
Sweet it seemed since she had clasped it in my sight,
And with delight I did the same.
I pressed it even as she before had pressed,
Yes, and kissed it where her mouth had kissed it too.
How that went through my heart and breast!

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People say, my passion for her must be less
Than I profess; "for if love's yoke
Truly hurt me so, I should be sick and pale,
Who now am hale;" so say some folk.
Sore is my grief, though it meet not their eye;
All my courage is sustained by hope alone,
And were *that* gone, I, too, should die!

2. Harvest Song

(*Ez gêt nû in die erne*)

Fair girls their way are taking
To join the harvest throng.
Who's fain of merrymaking,
Should go with them along.
There's many a maid disporting
Herself the troop among;
Now would ye go a-courting,
You'll get your wish ere long.
Were there for me a maiden fair,
I'd catch her in the barn-shed there;
So were I quit of all my care.
Good fortune Fate decrees them,
Whose sweethearts join the train.
The thing that best would please them,
They soon are like to gain.
Brave youths, arise and speed you,
Whose hearts for love are fain!

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The harvest comes to aid you ;
Now hide ye, twain and twain !
Then tell them tales, good youths ; thereto
Small learning will suffice for you.
'Tis like you'll find occasion due !
  If you can slip up near them,
Though at the first they scold,
Laughing ere long you'll hear them !
Then stories shall be told,
When, on the straw reclining,
The girls are gay and bold.
'Twill put an end to pining,
Once their consent you hold.
Such tales to tell good pastime is,
On that side of the brook and this.
To harvest, come ! 'Twill bring you bliss !

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DER GUTER

THE WORLD'S REWARD

(*Hie vor ein werder ritter lac*)

A GALLANT knight lay long ago
Sick in his bed; his end was near,
When to his side a lady came,
So fair, he deemed earth could not show
Among all womankind her peer;
He never saw a fairer dame.
She stood and spoke to him:—"Fair knight,
Now tell me how I please thy sight!
Thou, all the days thou drewest breath,
Hast served me well: now am I come and will reward
thee after death."
Gold was her crown; fair pearls were spread
O'er dress and brooch and girdle, too.
Then spake he:—"Lady, who art thou?"
"I am the World," to him she said.
"Thou from behind my form shalt view;
Lo, this reward I bring thee now!"
Her back all bare of flesh she showed,
Where clustered many a worm and toad;

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And like a carrion dog it stank.
"Alas!" he cried, "that e'er thou hadst service of mine!"
and wept and shrank.
This Lady if ye have not known,
On the World's vassals cast your eye,
See how, grown old in years, they fare!
One's gray, one's blind, a beggar one;
Old men on crutches, see, pass by!
A violent sway the World doth bear,
Cruel and wrong (alas the day!)
Life, soul, and honour lost for aye.
Wife, children, friends, and all his store
The World doth steal, and to the grave sends him with
one poor cloth, no more!
And when his friends have buried him,
The World comes straightway there, to bring
The guerdon seen of that good knight.
The toads and worms from every limb
Eat skin and flesh and everything
To the bare bone. Now mark this right!
Go to the churchyard; see the end
Of him ye call your kinsman, friend!
Wealth, beauty, pomp, where are they flown?
Athwart the rich man's mouth, behold, the World hath
laid a beggar's bone!
Then haste, for Death draws day by day
A full stage nearer, marching on
Without a pause towards us so!
For all of us he blocks the way,
Leaving us free two paths alone—
To bliss or everlasting woe.

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Ye sinners, pray with one accord
To the pure Maid who bore our Lord
In sinless, painless birth, that she
May help us to the path that leads to bliss in all
eternity![1]

[1] The subject of this poem is much more fully and effectively treated by Konrad von Würzburg in his well-known tale in verse, *Der Welt Lohn* (*Der werlte lôn*), which was written in the latter part of the thirteenth century, and with which Der Guter was evidently familiar.

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CHRISTIAN VON LUPIN

WELCOME BONDAGE

(*Sie reine, sie vil schône herzeliebe gûte*)

THE holy, heart's beloved, beautiful, and kind,
And full of grace,—
She solely dwells sovereign queen within my heart
and mind.
Her lovely face
I needs must ever love o'er aught on earth.
Such red there ne'er hath been and shall be never,
As her sweet, small mouth shows forth.
Her smile, her mien, and the bright glances of
her eyes,
Her greeting sweet,
Beguile the heart within me, that in glad surprise
It 'gins to beat.
No doubt can linger: ne'er was such a sight!
Look, prithee, on her throat and each soft finger!
Nought in all the world 's so white.
To be her prisoner I should never feel aghast,
But deem it good,
If she would in her white arms then hold me fast.

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I never could
On my dear oppressor sweeter vengeance take:.
I'd kiss her on the mouth and thus address her:—
"See, 'tis for its redness' sake!"

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REGENBOGE

The Three Estates

(*Ir pfaffen und ir ritter tribet von iu nît*)

Ye priests and knights, drive from your hearts all thoughts of hate,
Else will ye live to see your toil and misery great!
Ye should bethink you better of your true estate.
The priest, the knight, the farmer—those three should form *one* alliance.
The farmer for the priest and knight shall plough the field;
The priest shall save the knight and farmer, lest they yield
Their souls to hell; and so the gallant knight shall shield
The farmer and the priest from all who offer them annoyance.
Come now, ye comrades three in fair alliance!
If, Stole and Sword, ye give each other succour true,
All Christendom will gain great happiness from you.
O Stole and Sword, the *Plough* doth all it ought to do!
Stand by each other well, and none can bid you then defiance!

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ALBRECHT VON RAPPERSCHWYL

THE ASTRONOMER

(*Aber hüget mir der muot*)

ONCE again my heart is gay;
May is here and bloom of May:
See the buds unclosing
On the branches everywhere!
And the nightingale is there,
In their midst reposing.
Pretty prattler of the tree,
Honoured be thy dwelling!
Blest, too, may my lady be!
Like the birds, she brings to me
Happiness excelling.
  Fair she is, as one divine.
Pray that I may call her mine,
Ye who fain would aid me!
Then upon this earth below
Joys of Paradise I'll know.
Glad at heart she has made me.
With rare colours deftly spread
Her fair form is painted,
Mingled white and brown and red;

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With no evil thought or deed
Is her heart acquainted.
  She who makes me young and old
In her power two stars doth hold.
Mark this proclamation!
In them I can see full well
What shall come to pass, and tell
Their interpretation.
In their influence if I fall,—
Note the marvel of it!—
That shall hap which happen shall:
Just so far, and that is all,
I'm a trusty prophet!

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HEINRICH VON MÜGLIN

The Lost Falcon

(*Ein frouwe sprach "mîn falke ist mir enphlogen*)

A lady cried: "My falcon's taken flight
To lands far off from here.
The bird I reared so long is now held tight
By stranger hands, I fear.
Too slack I left the jesses
That kept him safe and true.
Now, like a nettle, vain remorse distresses
My heart and burns it through.
  And yet I hope he will return anon,
Though now so far he roams,
When his plumes break and when his bells are gone
And winter's menace comes;
When hunting-time is over
And all the hedge is bare,
He'll wing his way back to his corn and cover,
And fly no farther there."

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APPENDIX

I GIVE below the references to the text of the poems translated. For those prior to Walther, MF. (*Des Minnesangs Frühling*) is cited, but I should note that I have not always followed the reading given there. For Walther von der Vogelweide I take the large edition by W. Wilmanns (Halle, 1883), for Neidhart that of Friedrich Keinz (Leipzig, 1889), for Reinmar von Zweter that of Gustav Roethe (Leipzig, 1887), and for Der Marner that of Philipp Strauch (Strassburg, 1876). Karl Bartsch's *Deutsche Liederdichter des zwölften bis vierzehnten Jahrhunderts* (4th ed., Berlin, 1901) is quoted simply as "Bartsch," and Friedrich Pfaff's *Der Minnesang des 12. bis 14. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart) as Pfaff."

ANONYMOUS	1. MF. 3, 12.
"	2. MF. 6, 5.
"	3. MF. 6, 14.
"	4. Bartsch xcviii. 83.
"	5. Bartsch xcviii. 176.
DER VON KÜRENBERG . .	1. MF. 7, 1.
" . .	2. MF. 7, 10.
" . .	3. MF. 8, 17.
" . .	4. MF. 8, 25.
" . .	5. MF. 9, 29.

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DER VON KÜRENBERG . .	6. MF. 10, 1.
" . .	7. MF. 10, 17.
MEINLOH VON SEVELINGEN .	1. MF. 13, 1.
" .	2. MF. 14, 1.
BURGGRAF VON RIETENBURG.	MF. 19, 17.
SPERVOGEL I.	1. MF. 25, 13.
"	2. MF. 26, 34.
"	3. MF. 27, 6.
"	4. MF. 28, 20.
"	5. MF. 30, 27.
DIETMAR VON AIST . .	1. MF. 34, 3.
" . . .	2. MF. 37, 3.
" . . .	3. MF. 39, 18.
FRIEDRICH VON HAUSEN .	1. MF. 45, 1.
" . .	2. MF. 45, 37.
" . .	3. MF. 47, 9.
" . .	4. MF. 48, 23.
" . .	5. MF. 53, 31.
HEINRICH VON VELDEKE .	1. MF. 58, 35.
" .	2. MF. 59, 11.
" .	3. MF. 61, 33.
" .	4. MF. 62, 11.
" .	5. MF. 62, 25.
" .	6. MF. 67, 9.
RUDOLF VON FENIS . .	MF. 81, 30.
ALBRECHT VON JOHANNSDORF	1. MF. 86, 25.
"	2. MF. 90, 32.
"	3. MF. 94, 15.
HEINRICH VON RUGGE . .	MF. 96, 1.
BERNGER VON HORHEIM .	MF. 113, 1.
HARTWIG VON RAUTE . .	MF. 116, 1.
BLIGGER VON STEINACH .	MF. 118, 19.

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DER VON KOLMAS . . .	MF. 120, 1.
HEINRICH VON MORUNGEN .	1. MF. 124, 32.
" .	2. MF. 126, 8.
" .	3. MF. 127, 1.
" .	4. MF. 134, 6.
" .	5. MF. 136, 1.
" .	6. MF. 137, 10.
" .	7. MF. 143, 22.
" .	8. MF. 145, 1.
REINMAR VON HAGENAU .	1. MF. 154, 32.
" .	2. MF. 156, 10.
" .	3. MF. 167, 31.
" .	4. MF. 181, 13.
" .	5. MF. 183, 33.
" .	6. MF. 191, 25.
" .	7. MF. 194, 18.
" .	8. MF. 203, 24.
SPERVOGEL II. . . .	1. MF. 23, 13.
" . . .	2. MF. 23, 29.
" . . .	3. MF. 24, 1.
HARTMANN VON AUE . .	1. MF. 209, 25.
" . .	2. MF. 211, 20.
" . .	3. MF. 214, 12.
" . .	4. MF. 216, 29.
" . .	5. MF. 218, 5.
DER MARKGRAF VON HOHENBURG	Bartsch xix. 25.
HILDBOLD VON SCHWANGAU .	Bartsch xx. i.
WALTHER VON DER VOGELWEIDE	1. Wilmanns 14, 38.
"	2. " 22, 3.
"	3. " 24, 18.

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WALTHER VON DER VOGELWEIDE	4.	Wilmanns 25, 11.
"	5.	" 26, 3.
"	6.	" 28, 31.
"	7.	" 42, 7.
"	8.	" 45, 37.
"	9.	" 56, 14.
"	10.	" 65, 33.
"	11.	" 66, 21.
"	12.	" 75, 25.
"	13.	" 82, 3.
"	14.	" 82, 24.
"	15.	" 88, 9.
"	16.	" 100, 24.
"	17.	" 124, 1.
WOLFRAM VON ESCHENBACH	1.	Bartsch xxii. 1.
"	2.	Bartsch xxii. 41.
"	3.	Bartsch xxii. 99.
NEIDHART VON REUENTHAL .	1.	Keinz 1.
" .	2.	" 4.
" .	3.	" 18.
" .	4.	" 24.
" .	5.	" 30.
" .	6.	" 41, 25.
" .	7.	" 61, 85.
TRUCHSESS VON ST. GALLEN		Bartsch xxx. 135.
GRAF VON LEININGEN . .		Bartsch xxxi. 1.
CHRISTIAN VON HAMLE .		Bartsch xxxii. 34.
ULRICH VON LICHTENSTEIN .	1.	Bartsch xxxiii. i.
" .	2.	Bartsch xxxiii. 41.
" .	3.	Pfaff p. 141.
BURKHARD VON HOHENFELS		Bartsch xxxiv. 21.

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BURGGRAF VON LUENZ . .	Bartsch xxxv. 1.
GOTTFRIED VON NEIFEN .	1. Bartsch xxxvi. 109.
„ .	2. Bartsch xxxvi. 203.
ULRICH VON WINTERSTETTEN	Bartsch xxxvii. 71.
REINMAR VON ZWETER . .	1. Roethe 19.
„ . .	2. „ 31.
„ . .	3. „ 41.
„ . .	4. „ 72.
„ . .	5. „ 104.
„ . .	6. „ 109.
„ . .	7. „ 150.
„ . .	8. „ 170.
„ . .	9. „ 176.
„ . .	10. „ 186.
DER MARNER. . . .	1. Strauch xi. i.
„	2. „ xv. 14.
DER HARDEGGER . . .	1. Bartsch xlv. 1.
„ . . .	2. Bartsch xlv. 16.
REINMAR VON BRENNENBURG	1. Bartsch xlvi. 29.
„	2. Bartsch xlvi. 65.
TANNHÄUSER. . . .	1. Bartsch xlvii. 131.
„	2. Pfaff p. 187.
„	3. Pfaff p. 188.
WALTHER VON METZ . .	Bartsch l. 25.
RUBIN	1. Bartsch li. 12.
„	2. Bartsch li. 51.
WACHSMUTH VON MÜHLHAUSEN	Bartsch lii. 17.
DER VON WILDONJE . .	Bartsch lviii. 1.
DER VON SUNECK . . .	Bartsch lix. 1.
KÖNIG KONRAD DER JUNGE .	Bartsch lxv. 1.
BOPPE	1. Bartsch lxx. 1.

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BOPPE	2. Bartsch lxx. 19.
DER WILDE ALEXANDER .	1. Pfaff p. 219.
" .	2. Bartsch lxxi. 145.
STEINMAR	Bartsch lxxvi. 1.
FRAUENLOB	1. Bartsch lxxix. 169.
"	2. Bartsch lxxix. 188.
HEINRICH VON BRESLAU .	Bartsch lxxxi. 1.
HERZOG JOHANN VON BRABANT	Bartsch lxxxii. 37.
KÖNIG WENZEL VON BÖHMEN	Bartsch lxxxiii. i.
HADLAUB	1. Bartsch lxxxvii. 120.
"	2. Bartsch lxxxvii. 321.
DER GUTER	Bartsch lxxix. 1.
CHRISTIAN VON LUPIN . .	Bartsch xcii. i.
REGENBOGE	Bartsch xciv. 1.
ALBRECHT VON RAPPERSCHWYL	Bartsch xcv. i.
HEINRICH VON MÜGLIN .	Bartsch xcvii. 37.[1]

[1] I have omitted the final and, as it seems to me, somewhat feeble stanza of this poem; as space permits, however, it may find a rendering here:—

"A lanner, though it lacked the falcon's mettle,
Would better suit my wish;
On my heart's perch 'twould be content to settle.
What profits me the fish
That in the deep sea lieth
And never has been caught?
The bird, though ne'er so royal, that freely flieth,
Cannot avail me aught."

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